

The New 3Rs in Education: Respect, Responsibility and Relationships

The True Basics For All Success In Life

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The New 3Rs
In Education:
Respect,
Responsibility,
& Relationships

by
James
Burns



The New 3Rs In Education

JAMES BURNS

“To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.”

Theodore Roosevelt

“It is easier to build a boy than to mend a man”

Unknown

The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Goodness is about character - integrity, honesty, kindness, generosity, moral courage, and the like. More than anything else, it is about how we treat other people.

Dennis Prager

Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.

Helen Keller

Dedication

To my parents Albert and Helen Burns who did their best with what they knew.

To my daughter Grace who when she was eight years old always asked me to tell her a story about my childhood.

To my daughter Sarah who when she knew that I was publishing a book said, "Dad I am so proud of you."

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Intro

Who Should Read This Book

Often I will look at the title of a book and make a decision whether or not I think it would be worth reading, or not. A quick look at the first few chapters and the table of contents usually helps with the decision, and I decide at that point rather quickly whether or not to make the book part of my library. The New 3R's is a book that was written to help anyone who works with children, has children or is planning on having children in the future. The veteran teacher as well as the first year teacher will glean insight and strategies as they work to teach and develop greater respect in their classroom, encourage greater responsibility in their students and as they work to improve their classroom climate by developing more positive relationships. Elementary and high school teachers who work with students K-12 will find that the information and the strategies in this book will fit quite nicely into their classroom management tool box and they will come to realize that small adjustments in their technique and their attitude will slowly bring about large scale change in student behavior. Aspiring teachers who are now in college will be introduced to the New 3R's possibly for the first time and as they start their career will realize the benefits of incorporating these three very important almost intangible elements into their classroom.

Parents who struggle with the 3R's in their home may even find it enlightening when they realize that they too can use some of the strategies in this book to improve the

climate in their home and improve their overall relationship with their children. More importantly they too will now be armed with the same strategies used by their child's teacher and can work together with the school to improve their child's overall attitude and behavior. Parents will realize that small compromises that get made may actually be contributing to the lack of respect, responsibility and to the deteriorating relationships that many families face today.

I believe that the most important thing to realize is that The New 3R's are something that everyone wants. They are qualities that can't be neglected in the home, in school, and in society in general. They are qualities that many successful people have developed well before they became an academic success.

So, who should read this book? Anyone who believes in the New 3R's and who wants to teach the New 3R's to the children or young adults that they work with. Anyone who seeks change and has come to realize that it is impossible to teach the old 3R's without first introducing the New 3R's and incorporating them into their classroom, school, home, or maybe even into their life.

One

I'm Angry, Concerned and Yes, I Complain – My Apologies

As you begin to read this book you may notice a very angry or even complaining tone. Rest assured I am angry, not bitter just angry. Sometimes a person has to get angry in order to be concerned. It forces them to seek out solutions to a problem. It helps avoid apathy and the go with the flow mentality. I have spent time as a teacher and school administrator and have spent a great deal of time in faculty rooms. I've listened to the conversations that usually centered on students, parents, or at times school administration. The conversations were usually very professional with teachers expressing their concerns to one another in a professional manner. What was amazing was how the conversation would drift from being one of concern to one of complaining. Sometimes as the complaining started I would begin to complain myself, and when all of the complaining was over with the bell would ring, we all felt better, and we went back to our classroom, only to meet again tomorrow to talk about the same topics. The interesting thing, not one of us brought up a solution to one of the problems that we were talking about. I mean a real solution, not a statement like, "Do you know what I would do."

Educators do have the capacity to get angry, frustrated, stressed out, concerned, and yes even complain. I complain and at times enjoy it. In the beginning chapters of this book I may appear hostile and be expressing

myself in a complaining tone; my apologies. I am here to offer solutions to some problems that have plagued many teachers for the last thirty years; the same problems that I myself complained about with my colleagues in faculty rooms when I was a teacher. How can we teach respect, encourage responsibility, and develop a classroom and school climate where students and teachers can co-exist and get along.

As a young teacher I believed that my job was to teach the basics to my students. I was a Special Education major and being a male I always had the toughest kids with behavior problems that kept them from being in any regular education classes. During my second year as a teacher I was working with a group of middle school special education students who were classified as what was known back then as emotionally disturbed and who exhibited behaviors that would curl your hair. Teach the basics; fat chance. I had to teach them how to get along first, which was a challenge to say the least. I was angry and frustrated and was always at a loss as to what to do next. These students were disrespectful, irresponsible, and a fight was imminent each and every day. After my second year of torture I finally realized that I couldn't assume anything and had to teach everything. I didn't know it at the time but back then I began working on The New 3R's, for no other reason but for survival. I started by just greeting the students by saying good morning and by trying not to be judgmental I did small things like calling the students at home to talk to them and making some positive phone calls home to their parents. The most important thing that I did though was to focus on respect, responsibility, and compliance. Compliance is

something that is focused on very little today, I realized years ago that it was far easier to have a positive relationship with students who were compliant rather than students who were non-compliant. I also didn't ask for respect and responsibility, I demanded it through a system of accountability and consequences.

Some of the students that I have worked with came from poor economic backgrounds, were dramatically behind academically and by that I mean 3 years or more, and were angry and at times violent. The only real help was for them to make their way through the educational system and graduate from high school. If the Old 3'R's were going to be taught the New 3R's had to come first. I came to realize if these students were going to have a chance they had to leave school with basic reading, writing, and math skills. Slowly but surely more time was being spent on academics than on defusing behavior problems in the classroom. Some of my students made it through high school some didn't. A few had to be sent to out of district placements when they reached high school because their behavior problems were so severe. I knew that I couldn't save everyone and believed even back then that they key to the 99 was the 1.

I taught in many other districts since then and have had my share of behavior problems I worked in one district in 1984 as a high school teacher that was not quite as economically disadvantaged as my first teaching assignment but many of the behavior problems were very much the same. (Disrespectful and irresponsible) I stuck with my plan of always teaching respect first and

responsibility. In 1996 I was now working as the vice-principal of a high school I was looking out the window and saw two men coming into the building. When they got to the front desk they asked for me. They came into my office and introduced themselves as Mark and Adam and said to me, "We have been looking all over for you." Two men who were once my students in 1984 sought me out because they remembered me when I worked with them as students and enjoyed the relationship that we had. Truly the key to the 99 is the 1 or in this case the 2.

If there is any hostility, anger, or a complaining tone in my writing: again my apologies

I firmly believe that the qualities that have been discussed here need to be taught before the Old 3R's can even be thought of. Schools today focus on student test scores and are reliant on state and federal monies to support their local budgets. Teachers can't teach and improve student test scores if they can't control an overcrowded classroom of disrespectful and irresponsible students who don't get along with the teacher or each other.

Two

Why The New 3 Rs Are So Important?

As a young boy I always believed that if I excelled in the basics I would be successful in life. My parents insisted on good grades and, they made it known to me if they thought that I wasn't working up to my potential. I never thought that I would get into college, but I did and was almost asked to leave the school after my first semester because my grade point average was a 1.0; that's a D. I wasn't sure of my future and became frightened thinking about what would happen to me if I didn't start putting my mind to my work. I decided to go into teaching. For the next three and a half years, I worked hard and graduated with a 2.9. That was a lot of A's. I could never understand why those A's were so hard to achieve; I had to work three times harder than anyone else to get good grades. I had problems retaining information and being able to recall the information at test time. It was painful to study. I probably had test anxiety and didn't even realize it. I was constantly distracted by circumstances, relationships, and was a very insecure person. I was afraid of confrontations with others, speaking my mind, and usually said what I thought others of any significance wanted to hear. What I came to learn as I began my teaching career was that my students, other teachers, and even the parents that I worked with had many of the same problems. They were caught up with the trials of life and couldn't focus on tasks. Teacher and society in general started believing that people with these short comings had ADD. I had some pieces missing, and I definitely wasn't the sum of my parts. My students had pieces missing,

their parents had pieces missing, and many people had some pieces missing. What were these missing pieces?

After many years of my own struggles and after working with students, parents, and aspiring teachers as a college instructor, it became obvious that the problems that existed in schools and in society in general was not due to a lack of student academic ability, but it was due to a person's inability to develop a sense of respect for authority figures, a responsible attitude regarding their academic assignments and behavior, and the inability to form meaningful relationships with their parent, teachers, or any person of significance. It was once believed that if a person had an understanding of the 3 R's of reading, writing, and arithmetic that they would be successful in life, no more. Many children today don't come to school with respectful attitudes or a sense of responsibility, and lack the ability to develop a relationship with teachers, and believe it or not teachers have a hard time developing relationships with their students. Many students who struggle academically tend to lack respect for the teacher; instead, they work harder at trying to figure out how to get out of completing assignments rather than being responsible and completing their assignments. They also tend to lack the overall ability to form relationships with adults and friendships with other children.

As teachers, we can't be naïve to these facts, but we have to realize that this problem didn't start yesterday. It has been going on in society for many years. Teachers and parents must also develop these lost skills and attitudes in our students and our children if we are going to develop adults who will excel academically, socially, and emotionally. Some children develop as good students

without these skills, but in my experience, as they mature, they lack the skills to become good workers, marriage partners, and even parents. They become classic underachievers who are filled with knowledge, but rub everyone the wrong way. They also become people who can't hold a job or stay married for any length of time.

So, how do we develop these skills in our students and our children? How can we ensure their success in these three vital areas? These qualities won't develop on their own; we may even have to change our own attitudes and behaviors as teachers and parents. It may take some time, but it will be worth the effort.

Three

What Ever Happened To Respect And Responsibility?

The answer to this question is very basic. In today's society, children learn at an early age that they can say and do almost anything they want and get away with it. Children are also keenly aware that if they put up a big enough stink that their parents will eventually give in and give them their way. By the time a child has finished the so-called terrible two's, parents may have already lost control of the child's behavior, and just walking the child through a store can be a nightmare. What is the problem? Why do so many young children enter school and think that it is okay to throw tantrums or have very serious problems with compliance or respect? Why do so many young children simply refuse to do what their teacher tells them to do just because they don't feel like doing it?

Believe it or not, society needs to be held partly responsible for these children who enter school with this confrontational attitude that has teachers wringing their hands and wondering, *What I am going to do with this child?* The faulty theories and philosophies that have come out of our educational institutions, along with permissive ideologies of so-called child rearing gurus, have promoted the idea that children need to be respected more than they need to be compliant and that the ground is level. To put it plainly, we are now supposed to ask our

children if they want to do things rather than tell them to do what we want them to do.

People in society seemed to have had etched in their minds over the last forty years that children should have a choice when it comes to what they say and what they do. Children become used to questions like, what do you want for dinner? What do you want to wear today? We're going out now, okay? Or, you can do five problems on this math page; you can choose the ones you want to do. Or even better, you can either sit down or get out of the room, the CHOICE is yours. Children don't need choices; they need direction! Believe it or not, they want to be told what to do. Giving a child a directive produces security in the mind of the child. It makes him aware that the teacher is in charge, and that there is only one way to do things, and that's the teacher's way. Choices produce insecurity and confusion. Young children do not have enough knowledge built into their little brains to allow them to understand how to make correct choices. Once they are given choices that they don't like, the struggles begin.

Four

Personal Insights

Illustrations, stories, and personal insights always seem to drive points home and make things much clearer to a reader. For the past twenty years I have harped on the educational system to focus on certain qualities that I believe, if developed, will create an environment where students will own their behavior. Character education has always been of interest to me, but I've noticed that schools that incorporate character training into their curriculum make it a ceremonious event and reward all students for displaying some quality during a week or a month. I believe that there are only two basic qualities that, if worked on diligently, will help students become better behaved in the classroom and will help them develop into more capable adults as they raise their family and work on a job. The first quality is responsibility; the second is respect.

Responsibility

Educators are under constant pressure to improve student test scores and overall academic performance. If a student's standardized test scores are not up to snuff or if students have academic difficulty that can't be explained, the principal finds their way into the classroom for an observation to try and find something wrong with the teacher's instructional methods. The question that gets

raised: Who is responsible for a student's academic performance?

I was not the best student in elementary or high school. I struggled just to get C's and an occasional B and never did anyone question how good my teachers were; instead, I was questioned about what my responsibilities were as a student

My father knew when report cards were issued. Once he had that report card in hand, he would sit me down and go over my grades. Any grade below a C, he would ask me what was going on in the class and what my responsibilities were in order to raise my grade. I remember once I tried to pull a fast one and tell him that the teacher didn't like me. He didn't buy it and told me that the teacher didn't have to like me and I didn't have to like the teacher: my job was to work as hard as I could to understand what the teacher was teaching me. When I was a freshman in high school I failed Algebra I. I went home and told my father that it was no big deal and that I would take it again in my sophomore year. He said to me,

“No you won't! You failed because you didn't apply yourself.” I ended up in summer school, and it was the best thing that ever happened to me because the following year I got straight A's in Algebra II; it was a breeze. He told me that he would give me all the help that he could give me, but if I failed, I did it on my own. And, of course, if I pass, I did that on my own also. He made me responsible for my own education and did not want to hear any excuses.

My friend's son, who I have known since he was eleven years old, never complained about homework assignments, not having enough time to study, poor teachers, or that he didn't understand something. He took responsibility for every aspect of his school work. I looked at his high school transcript when he graduated, and there wasn't one A; he earned all A+'s. He was the valedictorian of his class, and he is now attending Dartmouth College. Before a kid can be successful as a student he has to be made aware by parents and teachers that it is his responsibility to be prepared to learn and accept failure as an indicator that they are not putting forth their best effort.

Bullying and Personal Responsibility

WHY IT'S SO IMPORTANT

It is very important to hold students accountable for bullying behavior. Have you ever been pulled over for speeding? If you have, you'll probably remember the anxiety you felt when you saw those flashing lights in your rear view mirror. You knew you were speeding, and you probably felt sick thinking about the fine you'd be paying and the points you'd be getting that would drive your insurance rates even higher. You were probably getting ready to give the officer an excuse as he walked over to your car. Maybe you told him you were late for an appointment or to work. Maybe your excuse was that your kid was sick and you had to get home. After the ticket was issued, you drove away shaking your head in disgust, and you reduced your speed. You inevitably vowed that from then on you would leave yourself more

time to get where you needed to go so that it wouldn't happen ever again.

My question is, were you more upset that you were speeding or more upset that you got caught? I think the answer is obvious; you were more upset that you got caught in the act of doing something illegal. There was no real remorse for your actions.

The missing piece is that we need to follow rules or laws all the time, not just when we think someone is watching. Bullying is a behavior that is often done very covertly; it is done when no one is looking. Bullies are cowards and need to be held accountable for their actions, but in many instances they're not, largely because teachers don't observe the bullying behavior. On the occasion that a bully is caught and the parents of the bully are contacted regarding their child's behavior, the parent asks the teacher if they observed what their child did or if the teacher is relying on the information that was received from other students. The parents then become very defensive and confrontational and begin to bully the teacher, leaving the teacher feeling intimidated and fearful of them (the parents). But even worse, the result is that the teacher may even be left feeding off the student who is the bully. The teacher then becomes very reluctant to hold this student responsible for bullying actions in the future. The problem is that holding a bully responsible using relevant and consistent consequences is the only thing that will stop him from terrorizing other students. If the bully is not held accountable, then all we are doing is preparing him for a lifetime of irresponsible behavior. He will never have remorse for his actions and will only be concerned about whether he is going to be caught.

Respect

I was driving in my car one day and was staring at the five bumper stickers that were on the car in front of me. One of the bumper stickers made a lot of sense: “If you can read this, thank a teacher.” I never had to be reminded of this when I was a kid, I always thanked my teachers, but, more importantly, I respected my teachers. I didn’t have a choice; I had to be respectful. I didn’t even think twice. I found out very early on as a student that before I had a chance to be successful academically I had to stay in my seat, not talk back, and do what I was told when I was told to do it. I realized that if I made any attempt to complain about my teachers, my parents weren’t hearing it, which really benefited me as a student. Today, if a kid goes home and starts to complain about his teacher, instead of the parents saying do what you’re told, they can almost begin to complain right along with their kid planting seeds of disrespect in the child’s head that will interfere with the child’s academic success. Kids who sense a division of authority between their parents and the school go to school every day with a poor attitude and are being programmed for a lifetime of educational- and employment-related problems.

As a teacher and administrator myself, I have watched the decline of respect in education today. It’s almost as if society wants to muzzle the teacher from saying what needs to be said to a student that will help the student improve academically. Teachers have to measure every word. If constructive suggestion is offered to a student by a teacher, it is viewed by the student and his parents as an

insult that is going to damage the kid's self-esteem for a lifetime.

As a high school student, I was no different than any other kid in school, and I tried to get away with as much as possible and always looked to cut corners academically. I was a freshman in high school and turned in a history assignment to my social studies teacher. This assignment was assigned two weeks prior. I worked on it the night before it was due. Within a day or two, the teacher handed the assignment back to the class. My assignment was not returned, but he asked to see me after class. I met with him and he said to me, "What is this? Is this all you are capable of, Jimmy? You can't bull shit a bull shitter." I was shocked and embarrassed and hung my head. Finally I looked at him and said, "Can I do it over?"

He said, "Can you? Are you capable of better work?" I worked on it again with his help and turned it in again. I received a B for the assignment. I developed a tremendous relationship with this teacher and respected him because he didn't feel as if he had to measure his words. I had a high regard for this man's opinion and didn't even think twice about trying this again.

Unfortunately, if a teacher tries to do this today, the kid usually goes home, tells his parents, and a meeting is arranged to question or berate the teacher. The sad part is that this is allowed to go on, and it is very commonplace in education and society today. Schools are constantly on the hot seat to improve test scores, reduce the drop-out rate, and to comply with federally mandated programs

that provide government funds. Every day, the news of deviant behavior is reported in schools, with school shootings almost becoming common place. Society wants to level the ground and create an environment where no one is in charge and authority figures can't even offer constructive suggestion to students and employees to help improve their performance. They are muzzled by the same systems that judge their abilities. The only way students will be successful academically is when everyone involved in the educational process learns to respect the human delivery system: the teacher.

Five

Forty Years of Small Compromises

Change has a way of sneaking up on you. One morning you wake up and wonder how you gained weight, contracted heart disease, lost your job, or in the case of dealing with a child's behavior, you wonder why he or she can't hold a job, get along in society, or cope with some of life's most basic problems. Often, parents have strained relationships with their teenage son or daughter and throw their hands in the air when the child is very young and give up believing that there is really something that they can do, or they begin to blame themselves as the child who is now a young adult begins to experience social and emotional problems in their own lives. Some parents may begin to feel so guilty about their child's inability to get along in life that they enable the behavior by offering excuses based upon some circumstantial or environmental defect and actually blame teachers and society for their child's disrespectful and irresponsible behavior.

Children didn't wake up one morning and decide that they were going to be disrespectful and irresponsible. The poor relationships that children have with their peers and ultimately other adults didn't develop in one day, month, or year, it happened over a long period. The change was incremental, and it occurred over the course of thirty to forty years because of the small compromises that parents, teachers, and society have made in the areas of

respect, responsibility, and relationships. Here are some illustrations of where society was forty years ago.

Illustration One

What Ever Happened to Mr., Mrs., and Ms.?

Thank God for Nick at Night. You know that station that gives you shows like *Leave it to Beaver* or *Lassie*. I was watching *Leave it to Beaver* the other morning and could not help but notice how all the adults were called Mr. and Mrs. No Ms. back then. Of course Eddie Haskell was a bit of a phony when he addressed Beaver's parents. Hello Mrs. Cleaver or hello Mr. Cleaver. Then he would run up to Wally's room and refer to his dad as "Your old man." The question I asked myself is, *What ever happened to Mr. and Mrs.?* Even when I worked as a principal the students called me Burns not Mr. Burns. I listen to my kids refer to their friend's mom or dad as Colleen, or Tony, or Rich, or Barbara. Let's face it respect is just not there any more. Everyone thinks that the ground is level. Is anyone in charge out there or is a kid our peer? The less respect kids have for the casual adults they meet the less respect they will have for teachers, police officers, and yea their employers. Let's see if we can turn the tide a little. Speak to the parents of your kids friends and call them Mr. or Mrs. especially in front of your kids. Let's get our kids to show respect for folks that are older than they are and make them aware that the ground is not level; somebody is older and smarter than they are, and they should be treated that way. I have a dear friend who

I have known for twenty-five years. He has four boys between the ages of twenty-six and thirty-nine. I have known them since they were teenagers and younger. They were calling me Mr. Burns up until five years ago. That is when I told them to call me Jim.

Illustration Two

Kids Can't Say Anything They Want

Many years ago, a wonderful friend of mine asked me what the smallest part of the body is. I was very young and probably very stupid at the time and responded with, "Duh, a finger." "No, it's the tongue." He also said to me that, although the tongue is the smallest part of the body, it can do the most damage. I never forgot the conversation that I had with him. Our words can really do some damage. Damage sometimes that can be life long, and sometimes we don't even know what were doing, probably because we just we're never taught how to shut-up. Kids and adults can shoot their mouth off and think that they are being funny or that they're standing up for themselves when, in reality, they may be doing more harm than good. I was watching a baseball game very recently and watched one of the players go crazy over a called third strike. This was a grown man. He had to be restrained by three other players and the manager. Of course he was thrown out of the game. He was also suspended for three games right in the middle of a pennant race. I guess he really showed them. What a dope.

We also like to have laughs at someone else's expense. My philosophy is, if we both aren't laughing it's not funny. Kids today have a real problem with behavior like this. They say things, get a laugh, having hurt the feelings of another person. I don't even think that they are aware that people are listening, not everyone is impressed with their wit, and they are creating a negative image of themselves in the minds of other people.

My friend was also full of illustrations and stories that were inspiring and instructional. He illustrated this societal problem with a true story that I always refer to as the "Deaf Boy Story," and it is worth sharing here.

There were two brothers. One was deaf. They had a friend who hung around with them all the time. This friend was the biggest jokester on two feet. He was always telling jokes or making fun of someone or something. One day, the three boys were headed out of the house and this jokester started to make fun of the way the deaf boy spoke. The deaf kid couldn't hear, the brother gave a half-hearted laugh, and they left the house. No harm no foul? The deaf kid didn't hear, so no one got hurt. No one else heard, right? No one heard except the deaf kid's father who was reading the paper in the den.

Let's fast-forward the tape. At the time of this incident, these two boys were sophomores in college. Two years went by and they both graduated with degrees in business administration. They both went on the job hunt. This jokester had an interview with a large insurance company. He had to go through one more phase of the

hiring process. He had to meet the vice-president of the company. Who do you think the vice-president was? The deaf kid's father, and the only perception that he had of this young man was that he had made fun of his son. It cost him the job. People hear, and they watch too. You never know when you are going to need someone or something. The things that are the greatest desires of our hearts are the things that will be withheld from us because of our past words or actions. Self-control is important, and if your tongue, a one ounce body part, has more control over you than you have over it, it will cost you when you least expect it. You never know.

Illustration Three

Self Control is Taught

Going to a Catholic grammar school for nine years had its benefits. We had to wear uniforms, so there wasn't any clothes competition. We went to church all the time, so we got some formal spiritual training. You couldn't even think of using profanity because you thought the nuns read your mind and would find out what you were thinking. We learned good penmanship. We were respectful, compliant, and responsible. The crazy thing was, no one gave me a choice in any of these areas; I was forced to do them. It wasn't like the nun said to me, "You can go to church if you like...why don't you try to hold your pencil this way?...is that the way to speak to someone? If I didn't do it the way it was supposed to be done, there would be blood stains on the floor, and it

wasn't Jesus'; it was mine. As I look back at this experience, the one thing that I realize is that this type of education taught me something that no one talks about today: self-control. The majority of the problems that a person faces in their life are related to a lack of self-control. Everybody either eats too much, drinks too much, spends too much, can't control their temper, lusts after things that they can't have, like someone else's spouse, and develops habits that they can't break that could kill them or someone else, like smoking or driving too fast.

Now why does this stuff happen? I never remember my parents or any teacher in my life saying to me the choice is yours: you can smoke or not or you can lose your temper or not or you can overeat or not. Self-control is taught. If I did something that exhibited a lack of self-control, I got grabbed by someone and got clobbered. I was taught to wait on line, raise my hand, take my time, practice until I got it right, memorize, and I got drilled on skills that everyone knew were necessary for life-long success. Look, musicians practice endless hours to perform a single piece of music. Students study instead of watch TV. Athletes devote years of their lives to prepare for an Olympic event that may last only a few minutes.

The concepts of self-control, delayed gratification, and discipline seem counter to our cultural values. I myself have suffered the consequences of the lack of self-control. I used credit cards because I wanted things right away. I am impatient, and vacillate between exercise and a sedentary life style, at times with little consideration of the long-term consequences. Self-control should be

graded in school and looked at as a quality necessary for success as an adult. If you or someone you know is having trouble with self-control, I have a good friend named Sister Houlihan who still thinks self-control is important. She is 4'8" tall and can still make a grown man hold his pencil the right way.

Illustration Four

The Medicalizing of Education has Produced Excuses for Disrespect and Irresponsibility

I don't think that there is anyone in society today that doesn't take medication for something: high blood pressure, diabetes, prostate problems, thyroid dysfunction, ulcers, or depression just to name a few. For sure, medication is something that is needed by many just to stay alive.

Children have always needed medication for childhood illnesses and some childhood diseases. It is only within the last twenty years that we have seen children being medicated with psychotropic drugs, sometimes even as early as preschool. About fifteen years ago, when I was a vice-principal of a school for conduct disordered kids, I was on the phone with a doctor who was treating one of my students. I mentioned to the doctor that the student was hyperactive. He informed me that I was using the wrong terminology, that she wasn't hyperactive, but that

she had ADHD. During our discussion, the doctor further explained that this student's ADHD was the reason why she had such poor impulse control and that she needed medication to help control her. In my opinion, poor parenting and the lack of good old fashioned discipline have played a huge part in the very popular current trend in society and especially in education where some professionals, including school psychologists, social workers, guidance counselors, administrators, and teachers take the easy way out and look for a quick fix to deal with students who in days gone by would have been considered disrespectful and irresponsible, not mentally ill.

Society has raised its tolerance for deviance. This same attitude has found its way into education and has resulted in lower expectations for student achievement and behavior. Years ago, if one person burned the American flag it was an illegal act, and the guilty person or group was held accountable with the appropriate societal consequences imposed. But, what happens if five thousand people burn the flag and the jails aren't big enough to hold them? You either build bigger prisons or make it legal to burn the flag.

When I was a student, there were students who behaved in a disrespectful and irresponsible manner. These students were few and far between and were dealt with accordingly. What happens when the number of students who are disrespectful, irresponsible, violent, bullying, and are involved in illegal acts starts to rise? A condition such as ADHD becomes the excuse for the deviant behavior.

“ADHD was determined to be a mental illness by vote of the American Psychiatric Association members at their annual meeting in 1987, and the new definition was then added to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Children (and increasing adults) who exhibit behaviors such as inattention, distractibility, trouble in following directions, a tendency to lose things, and difficulty awaiting their turn to speak or participate in activities are now seen as victims of ADHD” (The Politics of Deviance, 2002).

In the past, these behaviors were seen as achievement-ability discrepancies or just unruly behavior. Now, parents and educators both seem to be relieved that the problems that exist with behaviors such as disrespect, irresponsibility in the home and in school can now be looked at as a type of mental illness that requires a treatment plan rather than individual accountability and self-control.

The medical industry has developed drugs that have improved the quality of life for millions of people. In reality, if some of these drugs didn't exist, some people would not be alive today. I am a perfect example. I take high blood pressure medication to normalize blood pressure that would otherwise be too high. Taking this medication doesn't make me any less responsible for my own health. I still have to walk, watch my diet, and not smoke. Because medication is so widely used in education, people often cite the decision of some parents not to medicate their children as the reason why a kid's behavior is out of control. In my experience, I have often

called parents to discuss their child's unacceptable behavior and have been told that the child hadn't taken his medication. The idea that the failure to take medication can be used as an excuse for deviance removes any form of responsibility on the individual for the behavior. I know that I am responsible for my own health with or without medication. Students are responsible for their own behavior and cannot use medication or the lack of it to get off the hook when confronted with the consequences of their lack of self-control.

Parents and educators see mental illness as an out for them. In fact, many parents actually request the diagnosis of mental illness for their children. In other words, the parent are saying, it's not me as a parent, but rather biologically there is something wrong with my kid. There is no stigma attached to the label mental illness. Many parents and educators are convinced that their children who are diagnosed with some sort of mental illness are actually smarter, brighter, and more creative than kids who behave, pay attention, and are responsible. It almost becomes comforting for parents and educators to believe that it is not their parenting or behavior management techniques that may have caused the child's problem. They are convinced that the inappropriate or deviant behavior that they have been observing and tolerating is a result of faulty wiring in the child's head, which led him to throw tantrums, curse his teacher or parents out, bully other kids, and engage in violent behavior.

Medicalizing education sends the wrong message to parents, teachers, and administrators that a student's poor

academic performance or their lack of self-control can be clinically diagnosed and eliminated using psychotropic medication. A model focusing on respect, responsibility, and emotional maturity is the only response to the medication model that excuses behaviors and avoids relevant consequences that will provide permanent help not temporary relief.

Illustration Five

Obedience Has Become a Dirty word

I first started talking about obedience about fifteen years ago. It was one of the three things that I believed needed to be developed in all children. The other two very important characteristics that I thought needed to be developed in children were respect and responsibility. When I used to speak to parents, I would see a light bulb go off in their heads as they discovered this missing piece for disciplining their kids.

When I spoke with teachers about what their biggest difficulty in the classroom was, they always said it was discipline. If they were not able to maintain discipline in their classrooms, then they couldn't teach. I explained that they needed to demand obedience from their students. Would you believe that the teachers in the audience looked at me like I had two heads? One teacher said to me, "You train dogs to be obedient, not children."

Things got so tough for me when I spoke to teachers that I had to change my choice of words and use the word compliance rather than obedience. For some reason, no one seemed to mind the word compliance, even though it's synonymous with obedience. Everyone in the audience nodded their heads in agreement when I referred to the three things that had to be developed in all children: respect, responsibility, and *compliance*.

I can't understand why obedience has become such a dirty word. When I was growing up, parents and teachers demanded obedience. We were told what to do, and we had darn well better do what we were told, or it was curtains. Today, obedience from children is something we rarely demand, and it is definitely the last thing we get. Yet, parents and teachers complain constantly that their children are disrespectful, but they say their children "just don't listen." To me, it's interesting that teachers and parents rarely describe the behavior using the word disobedient. In fact, I think it's ridiculous that we are reduced to having to use euphemisms instead of the real thing.

Most parents rarely tell their children what to do. Instead, they usually ask them. They might ask a five year old, "What do you want to wear to school?" or "What do you want for dinner tonight?" Occasionally parents tell their children what to do, and when their kids don't do it, they ask their kids, "What do you want to do?" Does it really matter what a four-year-old kid *wants* to do? Society sees adults telling children what to do as some form of disrespect. The way it should work is that children earn the right to make some choices after they have been

obedient. But if obedience isn't developed first in a child, the result is that those children will ultimately become disrespectful and hard to handle.

In our society, parents and teachers seem to want to level the ground where everyone gets treated the same way, adults and children. No pecking order, no one in charge and everyone has rights. Rights to do what? Rights to say what you want and do what you want without any consequence? Society decided that it was politically incorrect to seek obedience from kids. Society has preached raising tolerance for behaviors that forty years ago would have been punished. The result? We have lower expectations in behavior for children and a greater tolerance for undesirable behavior and that has translated into poorer performance in terms of behavior *and* performance in general.

Illustration Six

Everyone Has Plenty of Reasons for Their Behavior – BUT THERE ARE NO EXCUSES

I have always enjoyed watching Court TV because I love listening to the defense arguments. I enjoy listening to how the attorney for the defense can come up with all kinds of excuses to explain why the person on trial committed the crime. The defendant could even have

confessed to the crime, and the defense attorney will still find some circumstance that caused the person to commit the crime, in essence to excuse the crime. Once, there was a fifteen-year-old kid named Christian Pittman on trial for killing his grandparents two years earlier. This young man shot his grandparents in their sleep at close range with a shotgun, put the leash on the dog, walked out of the trailer that they lived in, doused the trailer with gasoline, lit the trailer on fire, and got in a pick-up truck and drove away. The trial went on for weeks, and I watched most of it. The defense attorney was running out of ammunition so he decided to play a card that is becoming a very common excuse for deviant behavior. The defense attorney contended that the reason this boy committed this heinous crime was because he had an adverse reaction to Zoloft, an anti-depressant drug that he was taking at the time. I sat on the edge of my seat as I waited for the verdict. I was thinking that if a person can be found innocent for murder because of a medication issue, anyone can get away with anything.

I am amazed how family, environment, genetics, and medication can be used as an excuse for behavior these days. Once these factors are considered the cause of deviant behavior, the person who committed the crime or behaved inappropriately will not be held responsible. It follows then that they should be excused for these behaviors, in other words, not be held accountable. Ultimately, people should be held accountable for their actions, and consequences must be imposed. Consequences are the only thing that will stop negative or deviant behaviors such as talking back, not completing

homework, bullying, lying, speeding, sexual harassment on the job, stealing, rape, murder, etc.

Today, we have reached the point where as soon as parents have trouble managing their child's behavior or the school makes them aware their child is acting inappropriately in school, parents are ready to conclude that these behaviors are caused by ADHD or a teacher with unrealistic expectations or another child. Parents rarely think of holding themselves responsible, of asking themselves, *Where am I going wrong here and what do I need to change? Or, I need to hold my child responsible, so what consequences will I impose?* It's so much easier to blame the school, a teacher, an administrator, a guidance counselor, another student, or a medical condition. In schools, teachers blame students' poor behavior or poor academic performance on a child's difficult circumstances at home or that the child's parents will not put the child on medication. In society, if a person commits a crime that is punishable, the defense attorney will try to convince a jury that the person is mentally ill or comes from a pitiful family background and should not be held responsible.

As a school administrator, I have observed deviant behavior and have done my best to hold students accountable. I didn't just look at the students' isolated behavior at the time, but considered what would happen if the behavior continued, and how it would affect the students' chances for success as an adult. I was working as a principal of a school for clinically disturbed students in 1993, and most of the students were depressed, psychotic, and on medication. When I took over the

school there was no system of accountability, so I instituted an In-School Suspension program that was used as a means of keeping students in the school for offenses that they would otherwise be suspended for. One morning, a student came into school late and proceeded to kick out a window, punch a teacher, tear down hallway decorations and bulletin boards, and was screaming so loud he could be heard in the next county. He was brought into my office, and I said to him, “Nick [name change] I don’t know what I am going to do with you, but for now take a seat in In-School Suspension.”

About five minutes later his school therapist walked into my office. She was furious. She said, “You have Nick in In-School Suspension?”

I said, “Yes, have you taken a look what he did to my building?” “Did you know that Nick didn’t have any breakfast this morning?”

“I haven’t had any coffee yet, but I’m still talking to you.” I then asked her to leave the office. Did it really matter that Nick didn’t have breakfast? Of course not! What really mattered was that if Nick was not disciplined for his inappropriate behaviors, he would definitely repeat the behavior again.

I thought about what I was going to do with this student. I knew that I would suspend him, but I also knew that I had to begin to work on developing a relationship with Nick so that he wouldn’t react this way again. About 10:30 a.m., I walked down to In-School Suspension and brought Nick a bagel and orange juice. I told Nick that he should have breakfast before he comes to school, but if

he didn't, he should come into my office and I would get him something to eat. Nick was also suspended for ten days, police charges were filed, and he had to write a letter of apology. Had there been a reason for his unreasonable behavior? He had a reason, but having a reason wasn't an excuse for what he did. If I had bought in to excusing his behavior because he was hungry, Nick would have gotten away with what he did. But I didn't, I imposed a consequence. Nick's behavior changed that year. He tried to raise the bar with his angry and violent behavior; I decided to raise the bar with my consequences. It not only worked for him but the school took a real turn for the better with the student body realizing that this type of behavior would not be accepted.

There are plenty of reasons for people's behaviors, but those reasons are not excuses. What I showed Nick was that there were rules and regulations that had to be followed, but I also showed him some compassion and understanding. I imposed the consequence, but still made sure he had something to eat. I believe that this is the missing piece in dealing with deviant behavior. We are too compassionate and understanding, and we lose sight that everyone must follow the rules of a family, a school, a job, and society. If we continue to allow everything under the sun to be excused and decide that consequences are for the birds, then we can expect our problems with inappropriate behavior in school and deviant behavior in society to continue to get worse.

Illustration Seven

Can You Handle The Truth?

One of the things that I've noticed is that everyone has a problem with the truth. I don't mean we walk around lying all the time, but we are always afraid of hurting someone's feelings or becoming entangled in some sort of confrontation with the person we are speaking with or even the person we're living with. Sometimes we are concerned about someone's reaction, so we bend the truth or poke around trying to figure out what that person wants to hear. It really starts to become a problem in personal relationships when couples are afraid to make their desires known for fear of a break-up or a divorce. People can have a problem with the truth on the job, when a supervisor might worry about an employee's reaction to a poor performance evaluation. In education, a teacher might be worried about a student's or parent's reaction, and then could easily award grades that are not in line with the student's performance.

When I was in high school my guidance counselor called me down to his office and pulled out my grades. He said, "What do you want to do when you're through with high school?" I told him that I didn't know, and then in the next breath, thinking that I had to tell him something other than the truth, that I wanted to be a bartender, I told him that I wanted to be a lawyer. "A lawyer," he said, pointing to my grades. "These are not lawyer's grades. If I were you, I would start to think about doing something else." I walked out of his office and wasn't the least bit

offended. I didn't even think about going home and telling my father that my guidance counselor said I wasn't smart enough to be a lawyer. I never said one word to my father. You know what? The guy had actually told me the truth, and the truth really did set me free. I started to look honestly at my abilities, and I was able to acknowledge that I hadn't worked hard academically for my first three years of high school. I started to think about my future realistically. My guidance counselor made me take a hard look in the mirror and come to terms with what my abilities and my attitude really were. He told me the truth, and I appreciated that.

Well, in 1977, my father sold the bar, and I became a teacher that same year. I really enjoyed teaching. I was a special educator so I didn't always have the cream of the crop when it came to my students. In fact, my students were usually had the worst behavior problems in the school and could really get to me on some days. But, overall, I developed relationships with the kids, and things seemed to usually go pretty well. As I progressed in my career, I noticed things were changing. I was expected to put up with more and more behavior problems, and everyone was giving me some excuse for a kid's deviance. The catch phrase that seemed to be in vogue about twenty years ago was, "I really like this kid, but I don't like his behavior." Was this the truth? I don't think so. Is it possible to like someone and not like their behavior? The truth is, we don't like the person *because of his behavior*, and people need to be made aware of this in a considerate way. A person is his behavior, and the two can't be separated. I can give you the names of people who are well known in society for absolute

deviance, and you tell me if you like them, but not their behavior: Charles Manson, Scott Peterson, Jeffrey Dahmer, or Adolph Hitler. Can anyone not like their behavior but still like them as people? No, we don't like them *period*. The perception we have of a person is based on his behavior. If the behavior is not likeable, we probably will dislike the person. People need to know that if their behavior doesn't change, then others won't want to develop meaningful relationships with them, and ultimately won't like them.

Recently, a student came into my office (I was working as an interim principal) and discussed with me what he wanted to do after he finished high school. He wanted to be a doctor, which is a terrific goal for a young person. Well, I asked him what he scored on his SATs. He told me he scored about a 400 on each section. I was thinking in my mind that a perfect score is 800 on each section, and a decent score would be about a 650 to 700. I knew something right then: he wasn't going to be *my* doctor. I proceeded to pull his grades out and found that his math and science grades were C's and D's. I wanted to respond with the same question that my guidance counselor asked me. Do these look like a doctor's grades? But, based upon the culture and society's norms, I couldn't ask that question. I immediately directed this student to the entry requirements that colleges have for their pre-med program, and ultimately medical school. He discovered the truth on his own, came back to me, and thanked me for helping him realize that his study skills needed improvement and that he needed to take and re-take the college boards. The truth made him aware of his own weaknesses and how much harder he was going to have to work in order to achieve his goals.

Society seems to want to withhold the truth and make everyone believe that they are smarter than what they are and that their behavior is based upon circumstance, their environment, or lack of therapy or medication. Facing the truth about my abilities and my work ethic put me on track, helped me choose a good vocation, and helped me to understand how I needed to improve my work ethic. Subsequently, instead of floating through life unsuccessfully from one job to another, I worked hard in college, graduate school, then as an employee. So the next time your kids come home and say that their teacher told them that they have to work harder, that their work or behavior is unacceptable, or they better consider going to a community college rather than Dartmouth, thank that teacher for doing something that is a rarity today: speaking the truth. It really doesn't matter how we get to the truth as long as we get there. My guidance counselor was straight forward 35 years ago. I knew that by today's standards that my journey getting to the truth would have to be done with a little more sensitivity, it still worked and the desired result was achieved.

Illustration Eight

Who Will Parent the Parents?

I frequently think back to my childhood. I remember how my grandmother (Mom's side) spent time at my house. To this day, she is still the sweetest old lady that I ever met. I was in an afternoon kindergarten program, and my

grandmother took care of me during the mornings. Every morning when I woke up, she was sitting in a big chair right next to my bed. As soon as I opened my eyes she would wave and smile at me. I felt so secure seeing her in that chair. I really loved her a lot. My dad's mom lived right up the street. When I became old enough, I used to walk over to her house, have lunch with her, do her grocery shopping for her, and then just hang around with her. She would give me a dollar for helping her. I saved those dollars to buy Christmas presents for my sisters, my mom, and my dad. Unfortunately, my dad's mom passed away when I was thirteen, and I still miss her today. My mom's mom passed away when I was nineteen, and that was another big loss that I still feel.

It really doesn't matter how old you are. You still need parenting. Just because someone is grown and married doesn't mean that they still don't need guidance and direction. I watched my maternal grandmother help my mom deal with things all the time. Whether it was raising her kids or dealing with my dad, my mom always spoke to her and sought her advice. When she died, it was almost as if my mother's wheels fell off, and she started to stumble through life and always seemed to be looking for answers to some of life's most basic questions. She seemed to have greater difficulty being married to my dad and seemed angry at times until the day she died. When my dad's mom died, I noticed that he would drink more, and go off on benders for a few days. It was almost as if he lost his check valve and didn't feel accountable to anyone.

I am sixty old now and have been a teacher and administrator for almost forty years. After working with and talking to countless parents, I have drawn the following conclusion: Parents need parenting! I have spoken to many adults my own age and have found that their relationship with their parents is strained or they're not talking to their parents at all. I would ask them, "How long has it been since you spoke to your mom or dad," expecting to hear that they just had a little spat and it was for a few days. A few days, try twenty years. During that twenty year period, I wonder how much wisdom they lost that they could have gotten from their parents. How much help with their children did they lose, or worse yet, what did the grandchildren lose because these parents despised their own mother or father?

No matter what the age, people need to be parented. Some individuals who have a poor relationship with their parents lose their grip on right and wrong and have a tremendous problem figuring out some of life's most basic problems. These adult children often have a general sense of bitterness because of their poor relationship with their parents. They may feel resentful when they have problems raising their own children; because they become aware that they are receiving no direction or guidance from their own parents and that they have to figure everything out on their own. They might wonder what they're going to do with their child or what's wrong with their child. They should be asking what's wrong with them. Their children enter school and become problems for the teacher. They don't do what they're told to do and are disrespectful and non-compliant. The teacher calls home only to find a disrespectful and non-

compliant parent on the other end who is defensive and who believes that the school isn't being fair to their child. They berate the teacher and blame the school for all of the problems that their son or daughter is experiencing.

This was an all too frequent scenario for me. I dealt with many parents with this type of attitude as a teacher and as an administrator. In one district, I chose to run a parent support group. When I started the group I had seventy-five parents. They all did nothing but complain about the behavior of their kids and blamed the school for the problems their kids were experiencing. Once they discovered that I wasn't going to play the blame game, my group dwindled down to a precious few and ultimately had to be discontinued.

Parents want help, but they want the wrong kind of help. They want someone to fix their kids, but they need to find someone to fix them. They don't realize that the people who can offer them the most help were put naturally at their disposal for free, and that's their parents. The question still remains, who will parent the parents? Schools have tried parenting programs. These programs don't work. They offer advice, but ultimately it's up to the parents to follow through. The minute their kids gives them a hard time they revert right back to blaming everyone else, then start looking for more advice.

Who will parent the parents? Maybe society has to parent the parents. .Hopefully, someone will realize that all the wisdom, guidance, direction, support, love, and affection were theirs for the taking, but they chose to turn their backs on their God given gift, their parents.

Illustration Nine

Life Changing Words from a Father

As a young boy I experienced all kinds of problems in my family. My father was a bar owner and a heavy drinker. His behavior was unpredictable at times, and we never knew what was going to set him off. We were always walking around on egg shells because we didn't want to say or do something that would send him off on a drinking binge. I knew though that my father had a real interest in me and wanted the very best for me. He just had a hard time expressing how he felt. As I became older and entered my teenage years, my dad started to enjoy watching me play high school and community league baseball. He would go to my games, leave alone when the game was over (as I went with my friends), and would usually say very little to me about my performance. I never really expected him to say anything, so I was never disappointed.

During the summer of 1971, when I was sixteen, my first cousin, Jim, and I spent a lot of time together at each other's houses. We played baseball and hung out with other kids. I enjoyed the visits, and so did he. He was an only child, and I was the only boy in my family. We had a lot in common, and during this time we were good friends. My cousin wasn't as good at baseball as I was, but he was what I call a rooter. He enjoyed watching baseball and enjoyed watching me play. During one of his visits, I had a scheduled game. I had to be at the game early, so my dad and cousin came later. During the game

I had three hits, including the game winning hit. I was the catcher and threw three runners out trying to steal second base. I had a great game. When the game was over my dad drove my cousin back to his house, and I hung out with my friends.

I went home, went to bed, got up early the next morning, and left the house. The normal routine was that my mother would open the bar in the morning. My father would sleep a little later, and then relieve her around 11:00 a.m. He would work until about 4:00 p.m., then come upstairs and take a nap. I can always remember him sitting in his recliner napping in the afternoon. He needed that nap; he was in his late fifties and had to be ready to work the night shift.

That afternoon, I returned home around 5:00 to find my father in his recliner, but he was awake. He jumped up out of his chair like he had a spring under him. He ran over to me, hugged me hard, and said, "I was so proud of you last night." I thanked him, and I felt him squeeze me like he never did before. I felt the warmth of his body, but even more felt the warmth of his words.

Well, after over forty years I still remember that hug and those words. Sometimes parents can say so much to their kids about their performance that it can almost seem like white noise. Most kids know their parents are going to speak well of them because they are their parents. But sometimes kids can get a false sense of their abilities when their parents go overboard with praise. But, the right words of praise and encouragement at the right time can actually change a child's life. In my case, my dad

didn't offer a lot of praise and was very critical of me at times. This experience was life-changing for me. I quickly forgot all the times my father had said critical things to me. As a father myself, I know I have the power to determine how my own children view themselves. A father's words do truly make a difference.

Illustration Ten

Fear Is the Greatest Motivator

I never wanted to go to college, never thought I was smart enough. My father had different plans for me. He told me I was going. I wanted to take over the family business, which was a bar. After all, in my senior year in high school, I was taking classes like Chinese Literature and wood shop. I don't think I took one college level class in high school, so how would any college accept me. I made a deal with my father: I would apply to three colleges, and if any one of them accepted me, I would go. So I applied to a junior college, a state school, and to some school in the back woods of Virginia. They all accepted me, so I went to the state school. I think I mentioned this, but I'll say it again: my first semester in college I had a 1.0 cumulative average. That's a D. I got a letter from the college telling me to shape up or I was going to be asked to leave. I showed the letter to my father and said to him "See, I told you I couldn't do it." He looked at me and said, "You better do it because I'm selling the bar."

Well, I ended up graduating from college (with a lot of help from a lot of professors) with a 2.9 GPA. If you do the math, you will find out that was a lot of A's. What motivated me you might ask? FEAR with a capital F. I had to do it. There was no safety net. Yeah, I was afraid, scared, and a lot of other things, but you know what I did it. I worked with a great psychiatrist one time, and he made the most unbelievable statement to me you could ever imagine: "Jim, before a kid can be really disciplined you have to have fear." Not a fear of physical punishment, but a fear of disappointing someone, or even a fear of a strong reaction. I think the word that has gotten lost today is respect. I will usually respect what I fear. Do kids today have a healthy fear of adults? Do they respect adults or one another? Kids today believe they can say and do what they want, when they want. It is time to begin to instill a healthy fear again into our kids and make them shutter at the idea that they might disappoint someone. I am sick of the apathy. If it wasn't for fear, I wouldn't be writing this essay now.

Six

The Loss of Respect, Responsibility, and Relationships over Time

As I am writing these illustrations, I can only long for the day when my parents were alive. It makes me wish that the last forty years weren't so permissive and that I could write about something else. It might be difficult to comprehend, but please make no mistake about it: the previous chapter truly illustrates the deterioration of society and the family and educational systems. They illustrate what disrespect and irresponsibility can do to a person. Let me give you a thumbnail sketch of what truly is going on with our children today.

Many Children today have lost respect for their parents and any system of authority. As they have grown older they have become adults who, because of their lack of respect for their parents, lack the necessary skills to raise and discipline their own children. Too often children come to school undisciplined and lack the self-control necessary to respect the educational system, then they become behavior problems in school. The parents fight the system and believe that the system is the problem, not them. They then look for reasons for their child's disrespect and irresponsibility and almost become relieved when someone tells them that their child may have ADD or ODD. They accept this faulty diagnosis and begin to find all manner of excuse for their child's behavior, and by default agree with the disrespectful and irresponsible behavior and become more permissive in

their parenting. They then expect the school to do the same, communicating to the child that his behavior is not bad and that everyone else has the problem, not them.

Respect and responsibility need to be taught along with the ability to get along with others. Children who are left to themselves and are not corrected for a poor attitude in these three vital areas will become adults who will be dismal failures as people, students, employees, as mates, and as parents to their own children. The surrendered ground that has been given up to permissiveness by teachers and parents need to be taken back with an insistence that children learn the basics of being respectful, responsible, and they develop the ability to have positive relationships with others.

Seven

Teaching The New 3R's in School

Choice Is Earned

The first item of business in developing respect and responsibility in our students is to change our language. Teachers can't ask children to do something. They must tell them. We have to move from the interrogative to the imperative. If the directive is not followed by the student, a consequence must be imposed on the child.

I am not an army man, but my dad was, and he shared a lot of his military experiences with me. The first thing he had to do was get his head shaved, then they replaced his clothes with his army uniform. In order to get a furlough he had to be sure that he was responsible, respectful, and compliant with the wishes of his commanding officer. I asked him one day which one of the three behaviors was the most important. He told me that in order to gain more freedom and get what you want, you have to be *compliant* and *respectful* first. You have to do what you are told to do, no ifs, ands, or buts. In this case, he explained that if he followed the rules, then he got his furlough.

This translates to classrooms by establishing an environment where our students are compliant/obedient first. Once a teacher has created a classroom in which students know the rules and the consequences, and the climate of the entire classroom is one of respect, then the

teacher can gradually start to dole out freedoms, a little bit at a time. Instead, teachers today give students all kinds of freedom, then take it away when the children are non-compliant. This is exactly the opposite of what is supposed to happen, AND IT BREEDS DISRESPECT IN THE STUDENTS.

If a child is told to do something and he doesn't do it, he needs to be held accountable. A child can't be given unearned freedom. I say, no compliance, no respect, no freedom. If a child doesn't have a compliant attitude and he is not held accountable for his non-compliance, he will do and say just about anything that he wants to.

I like to use the illustration of a triangle to really make this concept of compliance/respect before choice/freedom understandable to teachers by using the visuals that can be found in the illustration section at the back of the book titled "The Keys to the Foundations of Character." The tip of the triangle represents the amount of freedom that a child should have at a young age. The tip of the triangle is narrow; when a child is very young, the child should have very little choice. As you go down the triangle, it becomes wider; as the child grows older and has learned to naturally display a compliant attitude, more freedom will naturally be given, and the child will learn to make choices when he is mature enough to make the right choices. As this process occurs, the relationship that develops between the child and the teacher is not strained, so arguments and disagreements are at a minimum. The relationship becomes one that is genuine, and there is a mutual and natural respect that develops between the teacher and the student. The teacher isn't

held hostage by controlling students and will not have to be concerned about telling students what to do for fear of an episode of disrespect.

As the child grows older and is respectful and responsible, a trust develops that is conducive to the teachers being able to allow choice. Not only does the child now have choice, but because of the compliant attitude, the child now has the ability to make correct choices. This is what I call the inside-out approach to change. The child realizes the benefits of his compliant attitude and develops the ability to do what he is told when he is told to do it without the teacher having to impose some type of extrinsic discipline. The child intrinsically realizes the benefits of compliance, and the positive behavior is now a part of his character.

When Choice Is Given Without Being Earned

In the previous pages I just explained the ideal situation; unfortunately, this is not what is happening in our schools these days, or in society as a whole. In Illustration two you will see a triangle where the tip is at the bottom and the wide part is at the top. This upside down triangle represents the way that has evolved in which we first give our youngest children choice without demanding any obedience. As time goes on, our children gradually get out of control, and then we are faced with trying to regain some control or manage uncontrollable children. Because children were allowed to make any choices they wished, but never were taught to make correct choices, they will go through life believing that they can say and do

anything they want. They will become confused when a teacher asks them to do something they don't want to do. Later on in life, they will always have trouble dealing with any boss or authority figure correctly.

Abnormal relationships develop where children tell their parents exactly what they intend to do, and their parents' authority becomes non-existent. In school, children try to tell their teachers exactly what they intend to do, then the power struggles begin. Any relationships between the child and the teacher become strained. Natural respect cannot develop between the teacher and the student when the student believes that the ground is level and that no one is in charge. The teacher is then held hostage by power-hungry students and constantly fears an episode of disrespect that he/she will not know how to manage. The trust that should exist was never allowed to develop, and the only response teachers can have is to become dictatorial in order to have any control in the classroom. The only other alternative the teacher has in this situation is to constantly provide extrinsic rewards for positive behavior because students never developed any intrinsic motivation to do the right thing. Positive behavior will never become part of the child's true character.

The Long Term Negative Effect of Choice

I used to play baseball in high school and college. When my child, Sarah, was born in 1991, baseball wasn't something I thought she would ever be interested in. But when she was six, I took her over to the park to hit some

baseballs. She picked up the balls after I hit them, then she got up to bat. She hit a few balls, even ran the bases. Sarah had and still has athletic ability: good hand eye coordination, flexibility, strength, and agility. Well, when Sarah was seven, she came to me one day and said, "Hey, Dad, can I play soccer?" I said, "Sure." So I went out and bought her a soccer ball, shin guards, and cleats. I signed her up for the recreational league in town. I must admit I was enthused. We practiced kicking the ball in the backyard, and we were both getting excited about her first game.

Well, the Saturday of the first game came, so Sarah and I headed up to the soccer field. After some warm-up activities and a pep talk from the coach, the game started. To my surprise, Sarah was in the starting line-up. She ran up and down the field for the first ten minutes or so, and she finally had an opportunity to kick the ball. She took her first kick, missed the ball, and landed flat on her back. She got up and came crying over to the sideline and begged, "Don't make me play anymore, Dad, I can't do it." She refused to go back into the game. The game ended, and on the way to the car she continued to cry, "Don't make me play, Dad, please, I don't want to."

I mustered up all my courage and said to her sternly, "You're playing. Now get in the car." She got in the car and we drove home. On the way home all I heard was a bunch of sniffing and whining in the back seat. I didn't have a very long ride home, but I can tell you this. She wore me out. I was emotionally exhausted by the time I got home. We pulled up into the driveway, and I sat miserably in the car as I watched Sarah get out and walk

into the house, sniffing and shaking as she walked through the front door. I sat stewing in the car and said to myself, "Who wants to play soccer anyway, dumb game." I then attempted to further rationalize my thoughts by saying to myself, "Soccer's for boys anyway." I walked into the house, stood at the bottom of the stairs, and yelled, "SARAH." She sniffled her way through a "Yeah, Dad." "Come down here." She came down the stairs, and I said to her, "Look, honey, you don't have to play soccer if you don't want to play. It's ok with me." "Oh thank you, Daddy." She gave me a big hug and kiss, then ran back upstairs.

Honestly, I felt like her hero. I was her knight in shining armor. I had just come through for her and given her exactly what she wanted. I was sure I had made the prudent decision; I didn't even have to ask her mother's opinion. I figured what's the big deal, no harm done. I was content in the knowledge that I had allowed my six-year-old daughter to make her own decision.

Well, I have another daughter named Grace (Grace is six years younger than Sarah) who came to me when she was six and said, "Hey, Dad, can I play soccer?" I said, "Sure, honey." The same routine started again, the shin guards, the cleats, the soccer ball, the practice, and finally the game. But this time, the outcome was much different. Grace ran enthusiastically up and down the field from one end to the other. She never got near enough to even touch the ball, but she had a great time. Grace came off the field with a look of absolute joy in her eyes and said to me, "Boy that was fun, Dad." She played the first season and had a ball. She played the next season and

really improved a lot. She wanted to score badly, but didn't have the opportunity. She still loved the game. To her, every game was an event, an outing that ended with a snack and Gatorade, lunch, and a fun time spent with me.

While this was going on, Sarah was into cheerleading, gymnastics, track, palates, and even a little weight lifting. She loved designer clothes, having her nails done, tanning, make-up, and just looking good. She watched her weight and understood that in order to look good, she had to spend a good deal of time exercising. She commented to me one time that some of her friends on her track team had less body fat than she did and that they could run faster than she could. It was just a passing comment, but I remember her saying it, and I most definitely noticed that she was bothered by this.

One day, Sarah and I drove over to the soccer field to pick Grace up from practice. We got to the field, and Grace got into the car sweating; her face was as red as a tomato. Sarah handed a Gatorade and a snack over to her in the back seat, and Grace just sat there, contentedly guzzling her drink. Sarah looked back at Grace, then looked forward, looked back again at Grace again, then stared straight at me. She said, "Hey, Dad, why didn't you make me play soccer?"

I said defensively, "I wanted you to play. Don't you remember? You kicked the ball once, missed it, and fell on your head. Then you begged me not to make you play again." She answered me with, "*So?* Why didn't you make me?" Now I was the one who was starting to

sweat. I said, "You didn't want to play. You wouldn't let up until I agreed not to make you play."

Sarah then made a statement to me that I will never forget as long as I live. She said, "But, Dad, you're supposed to be in charge."

Where had I gone wrong seven years earlier? At the time, it seemed like the right thing to do was to give in to what Sarah wanted. But it turned out that I hadn't done what she *needed* me to do. I had allowed a six-year-old to decide whether she wanted to play soccer. What had she really needed at the time? She needed me to tell her that she was going to play soccer because I as the parent knew what was best for her, and I wasn't going to give her a way out. She wanted me to be in charge, not allow her to be in charge. I had unknowingly let her down.

When I teach graduate courses, I ask my adult students the following question all the time. "How many things did your parents let you get away with as a kid that you wish you had never gotten away with?" I usually get lots of stunned looks.

Too often we allow our children to make choices and decisions that they have no business making. I see it all the time in supermarkets, stores, and malls, parents giving in when their children demand they buy something, or parents trying to coax their kids to stop crying or to stop running away from them. The children ignore their parents' pleadings. Usually, the parents say something to their children like, "What do you want to do?" Well, honestly, who cares what they want; they're three years old!

I'm not sure where this whole attitude has come from, but I have my own theory that Dr. Benjamin Spock had a lot to do with it. Spock's first book, *Baby and Child Care* was first published in 1946 just in time for the baby boomer generation. In his book he spoke about feeding on demand, respecting your children, the need for flexibility, and the lack of the necessity to worry about spoiling. The paperback sold more than 50 million copies and was translated into thirty languages. Critics of Spock claimed that he was "the father of permissiveness." In later years, Spock claimed that he never changed his basic philosophy on child care, that it was imperative to respect children because they were human beings and they deserved respect. But he seemed to retreat somewhat from his teachings when he made statements such as "I've always said ask for respect from your children, ask for cooperation, ask for politeness. Give your children firm leadership." Years later, he became more moralistic and said that parents should give their children strong values and encourage them to help others. This is only supposition, but I think Spock may have decided that he didn't like what he saw in society and realized that he may have played a part in the screwing up of generations. In later editions of the book originally titled *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*, he stressed that children needed standards and that parents also had a right to respect. He stated in his book that parents were starting to become afraid of imposing on the child in any way.

I'm not claiming to be an expert on child rearing, but I do know that if children are fed on demand, they will be

demanding. If they are allowed to say anything they want, they will be disrespectful. If they are not held accountable, they will be irresponsible. And if there are no consequences for inappropriate behavior, they will be non-compliant. Parents today always ask, “What can we do with our kids today?” My question is, “What are we going to do with these parents?”

Once I relinquished my natural right as a parent to make decisions for my children, I was never truly able to reestablish my parental authority. From the moment my daughter convinced me to allow her to make the choice not to play soccer; she learned she had the power to make every decision that came along in her life whether large or small. And the saddest part of all is that she blames me because I wasn't strong enough *not* to let her assume a role she was never designed to play in her young life. Dr. Spock has since passed away, and I think many of us are looking for a new voice to offer us some solid advice to help us sort out the mess we are in today.

Respect, Responsibility, and the Relationship Connection

The most powerful weapon that teachers can use in developing respect and responsibility is to build a positive relationship with their students. Now, this may not seem like it's too hard to do, but it is hard to build a relationship with a student that you really don't like. Oh, I know we all have been taught to say, "I really like you, but I don't like your behavior." In case you missed it, it is very hard to like someone when you don't like their behavior because what are people if they are not a compilation of what they do? So let's realize that kids do have a sixth sense and really know if a teacher likes them or not. Understand that as a teacher you have to come clean and say to yourself, *I really don't like this kid, he is a wise guy, but how can I build a relationship with him that will make my life bearable when he is in the room?* This conscious effort must be made because, if you don't like someone, you normally shy away from even attempting to build a relationship with that person.

In order to build a relationship with students we have to have an idea about how the brain works. (See illustration Three) The brain is formed in three layers: the stem, which is where the brain goes for survival; the limbic system, which is the mid brain where the emotions are located; and the top of the brain, called the neo-cortex, where learning takes place. All incoming information has to be filtered by the emotions in the limbic system before it can make it to the neo-cortex for processing and learning. The minute the brain is placed under any kind of stress, it downshifts and goes into the stem for

survival. The stem provides the necessary adrenaline, increased heart rate, and more oxygen during times of stress. That's why when a person gets placed under stress the heart rate and breathing rate goes up. The primary responsibility of the brain is the survival of its owner. The only two ways that a person survives is through the fight or flight mechanism. Once a person is placed under stress he will either run away or confront his attacker. Students who engage teachers in struggles and are disrespectful have learned early on in their life how to use the fight mechanism. To build a relationship with a difficult student requires that thought, time, and energy be spent breaking through the emotional wall.

Getting off the Brick

Often, teachers realize that they may have one or more students in their class who may be disrespectful and irresponsible. Once the teacher recognizes that this problem exists, they need to ask themselves two questions. Do I want to spend my energy battling this student everyday or do something that will ease the strain of having this student in the room and prevent the struggles from occurring? I think the answer is obvious. So what are the steps that need to be taken?

First, you need to acknowledge that the relationship you have with the student is strained. Also, understand that you may have contributed to the problem. Keep in the back of your mind that any negative comments you make to other faculty members concerning how you feel about the student may get back to the student, so try it a point not to talk negatively about any student you have. What

is the expression on your face when you see the student enter the room? Do you express a feeling of relief when the student is absent, and do the other students in the class notice your sigh of relief when the student is not present that day?

The second thing that needs to be done is to schedule a meeting with the student alone. At this meeting discuss with the student your concern about his behavior, and ask the student if you as the teacher have contributed to the poor relationship that exists between the two of you. Understand that the student will probably not say that you are the problem. Let the student know that if there is anything that you have done to contribute to this problem that you are sorry and ask for the student's forgiveness. Yes forgiveness. Remember, you are doing this to make your life more bearable. Your apology should be genuine. Keep in the back of your mind that you are trying to solve a difficult problem here, and that you may have to go out of your own comfort zone.

Once this is done, the student will now want to check things out to see if you are for real. He will engage you again and try to have another power struggle with you. Your attitude at the time of the next power struggle will communicate to the student that you are for real, then the brick with your name on it will be removed from the student's head.

Remember, power struggles take two people, and if you're having a power struggle, then that is an indication that you are trying and vying for power yourself. A person can only control one thing in this life and that's

himself. If we waste time trying to control others, our own frustration will become obvious to the student, which will only make the power struggle more intense.

Work on yourself, and ask yourself very plainly, Why am I having power struggles with my students? Maybe you're having power struggles with adults as well. Try controlling the things that you can control and work on your own strategies for diffusing the struggles rather than complaining or blaming other factors for the problems that you are having.

All Roads Lead To Attention

Rudolf Dreikurs (February 8, 1897, Vienna - May 25, 1972, Chicago) was an American psychiatrist and educator who developed psychologist Alfred Adler's system of individual psychology into a pragmatic method for understanding the purposes of reprehensible behavior in children and for stimulating cooperative behavior without punishment or reward.

He suggested that human misbehavior is the result of feeling a lack of belonging to one's social group. When this happens the child acts from one of four "mistaken goals": power, attention, revenge or avoidance (inadequacy).

Dreikurs' reasoned that these students will "act out" based on the four, principled, "mistaken goals." The first reason for their misbehavior is that they desire attention. If they do not receive the attention they crave through their actions (good or bad, e.g. doing well on a paper or

throwing a tantrum), they move onto seeking power (e.g. they may refuse to complete a paper). If their power struggle is thwarted, they then try to get revenge. If even revenge does not get the desired response, they begin to feel inadequate.

I teach a course in Cooperative Discipline, which is based in part on the Dreikurs model of the four immediate goals of attention, power revenge, and avoidance of failure. When I first began to teach the course I believed that these four motivations worked in isolation and were almost unrelated to each other. What I recently came to discover was that if a student doesn't receive attention for his behavior good or bad he will raise the stakes and move on to the next level and engage the teacher in a power struggle. If the student loses the struggle he will seek revenge and it is usually on the teacher.

When the required positive attention is given to a student they are then less likely to seek attention in a negative manner. Students who receive positive attention on a consistent basis will be more respectful, more responsible, and will find it far easier to connect with teachers, their classmates, and others of significance in their lives. When students don't receive positive attention they can become frustrated and angry and ultimately they become filled with despair. They begin to feel that they can't please their parents or teachers no matter what they do so what's the use in trying at all.

All roads lead to attention. When positive attention is given to a student The New 3R's become easier to teach. Students begin to feel recognized for their achievement

and don't seek attention in negative ways that destroy the foundation of respect, and responsibility.

As a young parent I became aware of the importance of positive attention with my oldest daughter Sarah who is now almost 18 years old. When she was about 5 years old I was in the middle of my career as a school administrator. I worked long hours and usually came home exhausted from my day. I would get home and quickly change clothes and read the paper or just try and unwind. I didn't know it at the time but Sarah was waiting very patiently for me to get home. She wanted to play and she wanted to play with dad. She would come up to me and say, "daddy will you play with me?" I would say to her, "honey daddy is very tired, let me relax for about 30 minutes and then I will be ready to play with you, okay." She would come back to me after the 30 minutes and she would be ready to play. I played with her, but I really didn't have my heart in it. I mean who wants to play tag, or play dolls with a 5 year old girl. I never once came home and said what do you want to do, and never had an enthusiastic attitude when I played with her. Sarah's behavior began to change; she became more disrespectful and less compliant. I found myself constantly correcting her and I was becoming more and more frustrated with her behavior and attitude.

Let's look at this from a child's perspective. Anytime my father is spending time with me I am doing something bad, and I get my dad's attention. It is to my advantage to act up because that's the only time that my father spends time with me and gives me the attention that I want. It doesn't really matter to a child what type of attention they

get. If they can't get positive attention they know that they can get negative attention. It wasn't until I started giving my daughter the required attention and involved myself with her by playing board games, going to the park, tickling her, and taking a real interest in her emotional needs did she become more respectful, responsible, and compliant.

All roads do lead to attention and if the correct attention is given to a child the New 3R's will be far easier to teach.

Teaching Respect

PRAISE—Begin a praise day and have all students write down something they like about another person in the class. It could start, “The nicest thing about you is…” and have the students finish the paragraph. This encourages respect amongst students and makes it the norm in your classroom. One student gets a turn everyday. The teacher becomes quality control and filters out any negative comments. One student a day leaves with a folder of nice comments made about them. Of course teachers should use praise as a tool for motivation. Remember to praise character, not achievement.

KEEP PROMISES—Students will wrap their life around promises you make to them. Make them sparingly and carefully. Consider all the variables and make sure you can control them. Don’t tell students they can bring candy to school for Halloween, then find out administration doesn’t allow it. Make promises and keep them.

SINCERITY AND HONESTY—Students can pick out a phony a mile away. Be sincere with your concerns and student abilities.

SAY HELLO—Say hello to all students. This encourages communication, helps to break down any walls between you and the student, and helps build a positive relationship.

CALL BY NAME—*NO NICKNAMES OR DEROGATORY REMARKS*

Don’t fall into the trap of calling students a name that their friends call them. Remember Leave it to Beaver? His teacher did not call him Beaver; she called him Theodore.

AFFECTION—Because of the fear of touching, teachers have shied away from touching their students. We are not talking here about inappropriateness, but rather a hand on the shoulder, a high five, or a pat on the back. This not only affirms but also makes the student feel that you recognize and are aware of them.

LISTENING—There are five types of listening: ignoring, pretend listening, selective listening, attentive listening, and finally empathic listening. We all want to be empathic listeners. This is when we listen with our body posture and our eyes. We reflect back content and feeling. We don't offer any advice but rather use listening as a means of strengthening the relationship. We want avoid reading our own autobiography into the conversation.

***2-3-4-5 X 10**—Every day for ten days straight have a 2, 3, 4, or 5 minute conversation with one of your students just like you would with a good friend. Have several of these going on every day. Around day eight the students will look to you for the conversation and develop a greater sense for you as a person.

LITTLE COURTESIES—The little things are the big things. Model what you want from your students.

RECOGNIZE EFFORTS—Recognize when a student does his best and focus on what he did that was right rather than what was wrong. Be positive and value the differing abilities of your students

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Encouraging Responsibility

BE PROACTIVE NOT REACTIVE

Understanding your own values and expectations is critical if students are going to learn responsible behavior. Too often, teachers react to students who fail to follow procedures, and the student may not even be aware of what the procedures are. Proactively teach students the behaviors you expect in your classroom.

AWARENESS

Try to get students to focus their attention on their own behavior and how it affects others. Never, never, ask, “Why did you do that?” Always ask, “What did you do?” Too often, when a student is asked why they did something it gives them an opportunity to alibi their actions and use circumstances or another person as a reason for their irresponsibility. Asking what rather than why forces the student to focus on his own actions.

BALANCE RULES AND REGULATIONS WITH COMPASSION AND UNDERSTANDING

Influencing the choices that students make can be accomplished when a teacher balances rules, regulations, compassion, and understanding. Too often, teachers believe that a giving the student a good talking to takes the place of a meaningful consequence. The talking to needs to take place after the consequences have been imposed. The student should at this point be given instructions on how to be more responsible.

ASSUME NOTHING—TEACH EVERYTHING

When a teacher gives instruction, he/she should never assume that all students heard the instruction, and more importantly that the students understood the instructions.

Teach and re-teach procedures, behaviors, and courtesies that we want students to exhibit in your classroom.

MAKE A PLAN

Develop a plan with the student that encourages responsibility. Present the problem to the student and ask him/her, "What are we going to do about it?"

Instruction, Warning, and Correction Why Expectations are so Important in Developing The New 3 R's

One of the biggest reasons why teachers experience disrespect and irresponsibility with their students is because they fail to establish clear expectations at the beginning of the school year. For some reason, educators today feel they have almost been forced to lower their expectations because of parental pressure or because they have to be sure that every student does well. Even students that do not perform up to teacher expectations are told that they are doing well. This does nothing for the student but set him up for failure later in life when he realizes that he is not as smart as everyone had told him he was. What about behavioral expectations? Teachers have been asked to reduce them as well. Teachers have been told that the students may have a handicapping condition such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), or Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD,) or they lack self-control, or that the students' circumstances or his environment have dealt them a cruel blow and they are just not capable of performing up to a teacher's expectations.

Here are some basics that must be in place in order to build respect and responsibility in their students. First, teachers must be completely aware of what they want their classroom behavioral expectations to be. This includes classroom rules and procedures. Any behavioral expectations are included in rules or procedures. Then teachers need to clearly teach their students what their rules and procedures are. Finally, teachers must determine that the students understand and are clear about what the rules and procedures are. Too often students will say, when confronted with their behavior, that they didn't know a rule or that the teacher never told him or her about certain classroom rules, procedures, or expectations.

If teachers are to develop the qualities of respect and responsibility in their students they have to communicate what is expected through direct instruction. This instruction must be understood by the entire class. They must communicate to their students the procedures for doing everything in the classroom, from coming into the room, lining up, going to the lavatory, watching a movie, submitting assignments, getting up to sharpen a pencil, getting a tissue, and leaving the room. Let's hypothetically say that a student does not follow a rule after it has been clearly explained. The teacher should respond by checking for understanding, then giving the student a warning. It would sound something like this: "John, maybe you don't understand our classroom rule about getting up out of your seat when I'm teaching. The rule is that if I'm in the middle of teaching a lesson, all students must remain seated. Do you understand it now? If you do this again, you will be in the classroom during

recess today.” Thus, the teacher has re-stated his rule, procedure, or behavioral expectation and made the student aware that if he or she breaks the rule again, a consequence will be imposed either immediately or in the future.

Student disrespect often occurs when teachers have not truly made their students aware of their expectations. When students aren’t clear on the expectations, they can easily do what they think they should be doing, which is not what the teacher wants them to do. Teachers then compound the problem by confronting the student and putting the student on the defensive, setting the stage for a future disrespect and future irresponsibility. Clear expectations and clearly defined procedures create a sense of security for the students. When a student completely understands the established boundaries, respect and responsibility become the norm in the classroom.

Expectations and Procedure Checklist

Classroom Procedures—Do Students Know What Is Expected of Them for Routine Operations?

Directions: Review the following procedures and check the ones your student will need to know and practice.

A. Beginning the class

- How should students enter the room?
- What constitutes being late (in the room, in the seat)?
- How and when will absentee slips be handled?
- What type of seating arrangements will be used (assigned seats, open seating, cooperative group seating)?

- How will the teacher get students' attention to start class (the tardy bell, a signal such as a raised hand or lights turned off and on)?
- How will students behave during Public Address (PA) announcements?

B. Classroom Management

- How and when will students leave their seats?
- What do students need in order to leave the room (individual passes, room pass, teacher's permission)?
- How will students get help from the teacher (raise hands, put name on board, ask other group members first)?
- What are acceptable noise levels for discussion, group work, seat work?
- How should students work with other students or move into cooperative groups (moving desks, changing seats, noise level, handling materials)?
- How will students get recognized to talk (raised hand, teacher calls on student, talk out)?
- How do students behave during presentations by other students?
- How do students get supplies they are missing?
- How and when do students sharpen pencils?
- How will students get materials or use special equipment?

C. Paper Work

- How will students turn in work (put in specific tray or box, pass to the front, one student collects)?
- How will students turn in makeup work if they were absent (special tray, give to teacher, put in folder, give to teacher's aide)?

- How will students distribute handouts (first person in row, a group member gets a copy for all group members, students pick up as they enter room)?
- How will late work be graded (no penalty, minus points, zero, "F," use lunch or recess to finish, turn in by end of day, drop so many homework grades)?
- How and when will students make up quizzes and tests missed (same day they return to school, within twenty-four hours, within the week, before school, during lunch or recess, after school)?
- How will late projects such as research papers, portfolios, and artwork be graded (no penalty, minus points, lowered letter grade, no late work accepted)?

D. Dismissal from Class or School

- How are students dismissed for lunch?
- When do students leave class for the day (when bell rings, when teacher gives the signal)?
- Can students stay after class to finish assignments, projects, tests?
- Can the teacher keep one student or the whole class after class or school?
- What do students do during fire and disaster drills?

E. Syllabus or Course Outline

- How are students made aware of course objectives?
- How are students made aware of course requirements?
- Are students given due dates for major assignments several weeks in advance?

- Are students told how they will be evaluated and given the grading scale?

F. Other Procedures

You may need to introduce procedures related to recess, assemblies, guest speakers, substitute teachers, field trips, fire drills, teacher leaving the room, etc. List other procedures that are needed.

From *What To Do With the Kid Who...: Developing Cooperation, Self-Discipline, and Responsibility in the Classroom*, 2nd ed., by Kay Burke. See the [LessonLab Skylight Bookstore](#) for information on other books for teachers or to find specific information about Kay Burke and this book.

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Eight

When Students Just Don't Get The New 3 R's—Use Consistent Consequences

The consequences must impact the child so that she/he perceives that she/he will definitely lose something of real value or “consequence.”

Remember, a child looks at life from two points of view: What am I going to gain? and What am I going to lose? If the consequence is not perceived in terms of being a meaningful loss, then there will be no incentive in the future for the child to stop negative behaviors.

The consequences must be imposed consistently and fairly to all, no matter who the child is. It is sometimes difficult to impose consequences when one is dealing with either students who are typically “the good kids” or typically “the bad kids.” We can feel hesitant about imposing consequences on “the good kids” because we may have developed such positive relationships with them that it becomes difficult to discipline them. We may not want to be seen as “the bad guy”.. It may be tough to impose consequences on bullies because we can feel intimidated or even “bullied” by them into a form of submission. Unfortunately, it becomes easier to ignore behaviors that we are cognizant we shouldn't be ignoring. We may actually be worried about a potential negative reaction from the bully if we call

her/him on the behavior, so we look the other way. When we look the other way, it becomes extremely obvious to others, including the victim and any bystander. What we are doing in this instance is becoming an unwitting bystander or collaborator ourselves. By our silence, we are condoning the behavior we know is hurting an innocent person. The hurtful behavior will certainly not change, and it may become worse or more potentially damaging, because we (who are in a position of authority) are giving the perpetrator permission to continue. In a worst-case scenario, we may openly blame the victim rather than the bully. We must become aware of our own weaknesses, insure that our good judgment prevails, and we must be strong enough to be fair.

This system will be most effective if your Board of Education approves of it in advance. Inevitably, when you try to impose tough consequences, parents will object. If your Board of Education stands behind your program and everyone is on the same page, you will find that the efficacy of this program will be much greater.

Consequences Your School May Adopt for Disrespect, Irresponsibility, or Chronic Defiance

(The consequences you decide upon must be communicated clearly, posted visibly, sent home to parents)

1. Letter of apology to be written by the student to the teacher and the class
2. The student must contribute in some positive way to the teacher and the class in general.
3. Morning or afternoon school detention, suspension, Saturday school, in-school suspension.
4. Possible reporting of incident to parents or police with possible charges filed and police report filed.
5. Removal or suspension from sports teams, band, chorus, forensics, etc. for a minimum of 30 days. For example, even if student is on the football team, and this incident occurs before or during the football season, student will still be suspended from team for a minimum of 30 days.
6. Student is barred from going on a planned upcoming field trip.
7. Student is barred from attending an upcoming classroom party such as a Halloween party, or other holiday party. Instead, student must go to the office or another classroom during the party time.
8. Student is barred from prom.

9. Mandatory parental supervision of child (in the school) every day for one week for some part of the school day.

Nine

Dealing With Parents Who Lack The New 3 R's

Whether it's between the teacher and the student or between the teacher and the parent, the struggle creates a very uncomfortable situation for all parties involved. Power struggles with students are something that is going to happen, and as teachers, we know this and seek out ways to try and prevent them or manage them in the most effective way possible when they occur in our classroom. Power struggles with parents are much more uncomfortable for the teacher and can create fear, anxiety, tension, and pressure. If teachers engage in one or two of them and manage them incorrectly, they will lose their confidence in managing future struggles. They may also lose the respect of the parent, and will have further difficulty with the parent's child who is in their classroom.

Here are some tips for managing parents who lack the 3 R's

If parents have poor communication skills themselves and are used to getting what they want by raising their voice and using intimidation, that is exactly what they will do during a parent teacher meeting. So, the first challenge that a teacher has is to overcome the fear of being yelled at. If teachers are fearful of parents raising their voice at them, and it is a fear that has come from their childhood, they will begin to feel like a five-year-old at the meeting. *No one* should ever be verbally abused

during a parent teacher conference. If the parent is on the attack and is becoming abusive, insulting, and downright rude, use this statement, and don't be afraid to use it: "I'm sorry, I am not used to being spoken to this way. Please calm down or we will have to have this meeting at another time." Usually that will calm down a parent. If it doesn't work and the parent continues to be disrespectful to you, politely end the meeting and dismiss yourself.

Get all the facts prior to the meeting and stick to them. There is no question that there are kids that we just don't like. During the first few weeks of the school year, a teacher can usually determine what students are going to give them the most trouble. Keep a record of their behavior. The records should consist of behaviors that are observable and countable. An example in your records would be, *I asked Tim for his homework on 1/17/08 and he responded, "I could care less about any of your stupid work."* You record each unacceptable behavior. During the conference, refer to the records and read it to the parent. People can't argue with recorded facts. Besides, you can be sure that if this student has said these things to you, then he or she has probably said similar things to his or her parent.

During the conference listen well and don't try to interrupt when the parent is in the middle of any tirade. You will only be accused of being argumentative. Try to understand the parent's position, as wrong as it might be, and remain calm. Try to find out exactly what the parent wants. Rephrase it and then say, "So if I do _____ and _____ that will solve the problem?" Usually the parent will say yes, that's what I

want. Then say, "Let me see what I can do. Can I get back to you in a day or two?" At this point, you are buying time to talk to your supervisor. By the way, if the struggle is something that you anticipate is going to happen during a parent meeting or conference, see if your supervisor can be present at the meeting.

It is important during conferences with antagonistic parents that you develop physical rapport with them. Basically, look carefully at how the parent is sitting, then try to match it yourself. Follow the parent's body movements, then adopt that movement yourself. It is a proven fact that physical rapport is developed before verbal rapport. Matching the body posture of the parent will relax the parent and diffuse any initial tension that may exist between you and the parent.

Lastly, be proactive and don't wait for a struggle to occur. Work on these techniques when you are calm. If you know your personality and know that confrontations make you uncomfortable, rehearse your lines and practice getting into physical rapport with someone who will work with you. If you try some of these techniques, you will find that conferences with difficult parents will go more smoothly.

Parents Can Be Bullies Too

Teachers who lose control of their classrooms usually do so because of the behavior of one or two students. Many times, the parents of these students have the ability to instill fear and intimidation into the teacher and in their own way bully the teacher. This scenario is all too familiar. A student who is a bully gets reported by the

victim to the teacher. The teacher doesn't see the bullying, but is concerned about the report and believes it warrants a phone call home. The teacher calls home and is immediately put on the defensive by the parent. The parent begins to react to the teacher's phone call and asks the following questions: Did you actually see my child bully someone else? Are you calling my son/daughter a liar? How do you know it was my child? Or, what did the other kid do to my son or daughter? After the teacher catches his/her breathe and tries to respond, the parent then starts with comments such as these: I heard your entire class is out of control. My son/daughter has told me that you don't like him/her. My child told me that he was bullied last week, and you did nothing about it. The parent then ends the conversation by saying the following: Unless you have some proof that my child bullied another student, don't call me again, and then the parent hangs up. The next day the child comes to school and has more clout than before and continues the bullying behavior. The level of intimidation and fear starts to well up in the teacher, who now wonders what to do if there is another report from a victim that bullying is occurring again (by the same bully as before). This is a *serious* problem.

What usually does happen is the teacher does everything to avoid making that next phone call to the parent of the bully and begins to ignore the bully, including any bullying behaviors, and starts to surrender the authority in the classroom to the bully. Victims who are in this classroom have to sink or swim on their own and go to school every day filled with fear.

Amazingly, the teacher starts to see the victim as the problem. If the victim says that he or she is being bullied, the teacher says, “Stop being such a tattletale, go back to your seat.” What’s even worse is that the teacher disciplines everyone else in the classroom, but not the bully. The rest of the class begins to see the teacher as siding with the bully, and the teacher appears to be agreeing with the bullying behavior.

Teachers, administrators, and school districts need to stand up to bullying parents. Victims will be left standing alone with no protection if teachers buckle under the pressure of bullying parents.

Successful Parent Teacher Conferences

There are two types of parent teacher conferences—**Planned and Unplanned**. Here is a checklist for both:

Planned

1. Do I know what I am going to talk about, and can I express my concerns objectively?
2. Do I have documentation to support my concerns about the student’s academic or behavioral difficulty?
3. Am I ready to listen and understand as much as I want to be understood?
4. Do I understand the principles and benefits of being in physical rapport with the parent?
5. Do I have work samples available for review to support my concerns?

6. Have I kept a behavioral log that documents the child's episodes of disrespect, irresponsibility, non-compliance and any other type of behavior that is disruptive to the classroom? (For example bullying)
7. Do I know how to overcome objections without becoming defensive?
8. Is my classroom neat and organized?
9. Am I ready to make suggestions to the parent that will help the child improve academically and behaviorally?
10. Do I know how to end the conference on a positive note?

Tip: If the conference becomes confrontational with the teacher and the parent disagreeing, find a way to get to yes. Once the teacher and the parent even remotely agree end the conference as quickly as possible.

Unplanned

1. Don't act surprised.
2. Parents that greet you early in the morning or well after school are not there because they are happy about something. Be ready
3. Be prepared for the parent to begin by raising his voice
4. Ask them to come into your room and excuse yourself for a minute. This allows the teacher to let someone else know what is going on.
5. Sit in clear view of the parent, not behind a desk.
6. Be ready to let the parent speak; don't interrupt.

7. Get to the root of the problem as fast as possible and ask the parent, “What do you want to have happen or what would you like me to do?”
8. Agree in principle only not in content. A comment like: “I see your concern works well.”
9. Don’t argue
10. Plan to meet again. This gives you a chance to be more prepared and be able to overcome objections.

Tip: When conferencing with parents, do not fall for flattery or begin to engage in any type of personal conversation. Maintain a professional relationship.

Nine

The New 3R's First – Then Try Everything Else

Everyday teachers are introduced to new programs, college courses, and teaching strategies that can at times provide so much information that it can be down right confusing. I myself teach four different college courses; Cooperative Discipline, Brain Based Learning, Multiple Intelligences, and Disability Awareness and Inclusion Strategies. Teachers leave the class with a wealth of information and strategies that they are eager to take back to their classrooms and use with the hope that these new strategies will make a difference in their teaching or in the way their students learn. Sometimes this isn't always the case. I think we have to ask ourselves a very important question. Do we as adults really listen to people that we don't respect and that we don't have a relationship with? I think the answer is obvious, we may look like we are listening but the information goes in one ear and out the other. Children are no different.

Before a teacher can use a new strategy they have to command the respect of their students. New strategies are great, but without the presence of a mutual respect utilizing them can be frustrating, and discouraging. On one occasion I observed a young female teacher as a middle school vice-principal. When I walked into the room I truly believed that this was going to be a negative evaluation. Students were all over the room, there was a lot of talking, and it really appeared that nothing was

going on. The one thing that I did notice though was that the students really liked her as their teacher. She never had to ask twice, the students listened, and were respectful to the teacher and responsible for their behavior. I didn't think she had control of the classroom but she had the confidence to allow students to move around and talk because she had the ability to reign them in anytime that she wanted. She knew herself and her teaching style and it worked for her. I am sure that she didn't know it at the time but she was using The New 3R's back then. I went into the room thinking that this was going to be a negative evaluation and left with nothing but respect for her abilities. She knew that she could teach her content. She wasn't using any new strategy, she cared about her students and they in turn were respectful, and responsible.

One of my administrative colleagues went in for an observation about six weeks later. He didn't see things quite the way I did. He believed that her students were out of control, and gave her a less than favorable evaluation. He instructed her to tighten the reins, keep the kids in their seats, keep talking to a minimum, and discipline the students for even the slightest infraction. She came to me and asked me what she should do. I told her that the principal who observed her was my boss also and that she better do what she was told.

This teacher was asked to do something that she was not capable of. Teach content without the presence of The New 3R's. The students reacted to her change in attitude and she started to have more discipline problems not less. She was asked to be someone that she wasn't. She lost

control of the classroom. It wasn't until I advocated for the teacher and convinced the principal that teaching strategies weren't as important as a caring teacher who teaches respect and responsibility. Teach The New 3R's first then everything else.

Ten

Taking Care Of Yourself is a Prerequisite for Teaching

The New 3 R's

Without physical and mental well being, teachers will never be able to focus on the huge job they have of teaching the 3 R's. Teachers on a daily basis are placed under undue stress and tension. The workload may seem like it is never-ending. Just when they think that they have it under control, a memo appears giving them another assignment that creates more anxiety. Daily, teachers feel less appreciated and often just feel like they want to give up. They leave school exhausted both physically and emotionally, and often when they get home they don't even have the energy to devote to their families or their personal lives. The pressure from the job creates such stress that they lose their focus on their diet and begin to eat the wrong foods. They become so lethargic that exercise isn't even a consideration. Because of exhaustion, they stop reading for enjoyment, and conversations with their loved ones become just small talk that has no real substance. They tend to lose sight of the relationships in their lives that mean the most to them and are with their loved ones physically, but not emotionally. They tend to live day to day just trying to survive and are not even thinking of what the real big picture of their life purpose really is.

Stephen Covey's book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* describes seven habits that if

incorporated into a person's life will motivate and inspire him or her to achieve balance. The habits are Be Proactive, Begin with the End in Mind, Put First Things First, Think Win-Win, Seek First to Understand then to be Understood, Synergize, and Sharpen the Saw. The seventh habit, Sharpen the Saw, is particularly relevant.

The following is an excerpt from The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People:

Suppose you were to come upon someone in the woods working feverishly to saw down a tree. "What are you doing?" you ask. "Can't you see?" comes the impatient reply. "I'm sawing down this tree." "You look exhausted!" you exclaim. "How long have you been going at it?" "Over Five hours," he returns, "and I'm beat! This is hard work." "Well, why don't you take a break for a few minutes and sharpen the saw?" you inquire. "I'm sure it would go a lot faster." "I don't have time to sharpen the saw," the man says emphatically. "I'm too busy sawing."

Sometimes we are so busy working that we just don't take the time for ourselves and our family. In his book, Stephen Covey explains that people should spend time in what he calls "renewal." Renewal is when we preserve and enhance the greatest asset we have, which is ourselves. Unfortunately, sometimes our family may just think that we are taking time away from them when in essence we are trying to we make ourselves stronger. By practicing Covey's four dimensions that are explained below, a person will become stronger and be able to fight

the stresses of life and be a better parent, spouse, son, daughter, and yes, even teacher.

The Physical Dimension

The physical dimension involves caring for our physical body including eating right and getting enough rest and exercise. If we think that we don't have enough time to exercise, understand that we don't have the time not to. Often, we will think that in order to get the right exercise we have to join a gym and hire a trainer. We can just take a walk or do a few calisthenics, and we will start to get results. Better yet, we can take a walk with our children and enjoy a good conversation along the way.

The Mental Dimension

We don't read enough for pleasure or for enrichment. For some reason, when we graduate from college we stop doing any serious reading or research. Too often, our time is spent watching television and not enough time is spent in our mental development. I know some folks who get cranky and despondent if they don't see their favorite shows on certain nights. With the advent of TiVo, we can record just about anything we want for future viewing. We can get so caught up in television that we lose sight of other things we can do with our minds. Our minds are like muscles, and have to be developed and worked on or they will atrophy. We need to find things that we like to read and that inspire and encourage us. Then we should make a commitment to try and read a book a month. Keep in mind that books on tape are in the public library as well.

The Social/Emotional Dimension

If we come home worn out from the day, we may not have the energy to devote to the key people in our lives. Often, these key people (husband, wife, son, and daughter) can feel short-changed by the lack of time and attention that we give to them. Too often, we come home and want to talk about some snot-nosed kid who gave us a hard time that day. That is not the conversation our loved ones want to have with us. Oh, they do want to hear about our day, but they also have a desire for us to have an equal interest in their day. Remember one thing, the school we are working in can run with us or without us. We may believe we are indispensable at work, but that is an absolute fallacy. We can be replaced—and we may not even be missed. But can our family run without us? You know the answer. Your family needs you and you need them. There isn't a person alive who on their death bed stated that they wished they had spent more time at work. We must focus on giving the people who love us the time they deserve. Then they will give us their blessing when we go off to work.

The Spiritual Dimension

The Spiritual Dimension is a very private area for most people. Many people have their own method of feeding their soul. Some folks communicate with nature, read inspirational literature, or spend quiet time alone in prayerful meditation. The great reformer Martin Luther said, "I have so much to do today that I will have to spend three hours praying instead of two." I have come to realize that there is a spiritual connection that all people want, but that many people do not do enough to develop

it. The spiritual dimension often gets ignored, and that can leave a large void in a person's life.

Eleven

A New Voice in Education

What are educators really looking for? They're looking for solutions to problems that have plagued the educational system for at least the last thirty years. But what do educators really want? Educators today want to be treated with respect. They want students to listen to them and do what they are told to do, and they want parents to support their efforts in the process of educating their children. Teachers across the board believe they spend too much time disciplining their students, which takes away from their teaching. The result is dismal; test scores are down, and it seems that children are learning less. With No Child Left Behind, teachers are under more pressure than ever to improve their students' test scores and academic performance, but again, teachers just have to spend a disproportionate amount of their day dealing with episodes of non-compliance and disrespect in their classroom, and they can't spend all their instructional time on academics. The teacher's job is to teach, not ward off students who are disrespectful, irresponsible, and who just can't seem to get along with anyone.

What do teachers want? They want an environment where they can wear one hat and teach their students to the best of their abilities. Educators don't want to play the role of a psychologist, social worker, referee, or even the parent.

What most people don't realize is that students who lack the 3 R's are just the tip of the iceberg. Students are not lacking respect and responsibility in dealing with adults anymore; they have trouble managing relationships with their peers. The media has downplayed many of the school shootings since the Columbine High School incident. School shootings, violence, bullying, and gang activity are all related to disrespect and irresponsibility. The problems started with students believing that they could actually display these attitudes toward their parents, then their teachers, and win the battle. Once students have the perception that they can bully their parents or teachers and get away with it, it is only a matter of time before they will have trouble with anyone that crosses their path, including their parents, teachers, peers, boss, and ultimately the police.

Teachers have a job to do: teach. The more time they spend dealing with students who want to interfere with the educational process, the less time they have to do their job. The time has come to hear a new voice and to start taking a tougher stance with students who want to disrupt the educational process for students who want to learn and for the teachers who want to teach.

Illustration One

Keys to the Foundation of Character

- Teach Compliance and Respect
- From birth to the age of 7 or 8 we work in the tip of the triangle.
- Have clear goals, rules and procedures

At a *young age* adults need to restrain inappropriate behaviors and insist on compliance. We should lead by the power of our authority

From birth to the age of 7 or 8 we work in the tip of the triangle.

Have clear goals, rules and procedures

Build standards and principles into the child. Teach Self-Control

Children enter mental puberty around the age of 9 or 10

This is when they begin to think as an adult

Between the ages of 9 and 13 behaviors need to be taught that stress respect, responsibility, and compliance. When the child understands authority and can self generate these behaviors he is now ready to have relational interaction with adults.

Character needs to be stressed at this age.

With teenagers - We lead by the power of our relational influence and look to help them understand relationships and friendships and the application of character in their life.

Once compliance is established and authority is understood we should allow more freedom as we move to the bottom of the triangle.

Illustration Two

What We Do Now!!!

The Exact Opposite

FREEDOM AND CHOICES TO YOUNG CHILDREN – 2-9 TEMPER
TANTRUMS, CRYING AND WHINNING. IT IS VERY EASY TO GIVE IN
TO A CRYING CHILD!

NO BOUNDRIES BETWEEN 10-13 YEARS OLD

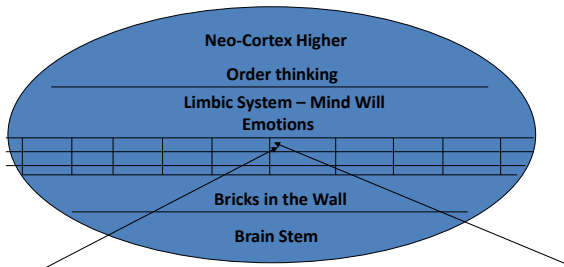
START SAYING AND DOING WHAT THEY WANT VERY
ARGUMENTATIVE-CONCERN DEVELOPS ON THE PART OF TEACHERS
AND PARENTS REGARDING THE CHILD'S BEHAVIOR

REBELLION, GRADES 9-12, NO SELF DISCIPLINE, OR
SELF MOTIVATION

POWER STRUGGLES, NO CHARACTER. IT IS VERY
DIFFICULT TO RESTRAIN THE BEHAVIORS OF A
REBELLIOUS TEENAGER

Illustration Three

BRICKS IN THE WALL



All incoming information must pass through the emotions before it can reach the neo-cortex for processing.

As the brain is placed under stress the need for survival becomes greater. It then downshifts into the stem. There are only two ways it can survive ----- FIGHT OR FLIGHT. A person with the FIGHT mentality will develop conduct problems. A person with the FLIGHT mentality develops clinical problems. Conduct problems require respect, Clinical problems require responsibility

Illustration Four

Stop Asking Questions and Start Giving Commands

STOP ASKING	START SAYING
We're going to do math now, okay?	Take out your math book and turn to page ...
John, why are you out of your seat?	John, sit down NOW.
Why are you late?	You are late; see me after class.
What is your problem today? What do you want to do?	I need you to stop doing ... and then start doing ...
Where is your pencil?	You are unprepared. (Assign consequence. Give student a pencil to do the assignment.)
Did you hit John?	You hit John. (Assign consequence.)
Where were you for the last ten minutes?	You were out of the room too long. (Assign consequence.)
What five math problems do you want to do?	Do problems 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11.
Susie, why are you talking to Lauren while I'm teaching?	Susie, start focusing and listen to what I'm teaching.
Why are you kids talking in line?	Everyone face forward, stand quietly, and get ready to leave the room.
Where is your homework? You didn't turn it in.	You did not turn your homework in; you will be staying in for recess.
John, where do you get that kind of language?	John, profanity and vulgarity is unacceptable in this class.
Who do you think you are talking to with that tone of voice?	I don't know who you think you are talking to, but I will not be spoken to that way.
How come your project is three days late?	Your project is late. I will be lowering your grade.

John, why is your head down during class?	John, pick your head up and open your book.
---	---

Establish your expectations so your students know what you want in advance and deliver your statement with a leadership posture.

Illustration Five

Comments That a Teacher Avoids by Making Statements Rather Than Asking Questions

Teacher Says	Typical Student Response
Avoid Saying These So ...	You Don't Get These
We're going to do math now, okay?	I hate math. I don't want to do math.
John, why are you out of your seat?	I had to throw something in the garbage. (Even though out-of-seat behavior is not allowed in the classroom.)
Why are you late?	My mother woke me up late.
What is your problem today? What do you want to do?	School is boring. I don't want to be here.
Where is your pencil?	I loaned it to Jim yesterday; he never gave it back.
Did you hit John?	Yeah, I hit him. He hit me first. (Or the student will lie and deny that he did it.)
Where were you for the last ten minutes?	The principal stopped me in the hall. (The principal talked to the student for ten seconds.)
What five math problems do you want to do?	I don't want to do this page; it's too hard. Can I do another page?
Susie, why are you talking to Lauren while I'm teaching?	I needed to tell her something. God, calm down.
Why are you kids talking in line?	He pushed me.
Where is your homework? You didn't turn it in.	I did it, but I left it in my room.
John, where do you get that kind of language?	Bob talked that way, and you didn't say anything to him.

Who do you think you are talking to with that tone of voice?	I didn't like how you spoke to me.
How come your project is three days late?	You didn't give us enough time.
John, why is your head down during class?	I know this stuff; leave me alone.

Anytime teachers ask questions like these they open the door for the student to transfer responsibility to someone else or to some circumstance and away from him or her.

About Jim Burns

Jim Burns is one of America's most inspirational educational speakers. His humorous and insightful presentations touch and influence his audiences in an unforgettable way. He is best known for his presentations on Bullying, Motivating Disaffected Students, Diffusing Power Struggles, & of course The New 3Rs in Education. Jim has worked as a teacher and administrator since 1977. He is also an accomplished college instructor who teaches graduate level courses in the areas of Cooperative Discipline, Disability Awareness, Brain Compatible Methods in the Classroom, and Teaching and Learning through Multiple Intelligences. Jim is the author and co-designer of The Bully Proof Classroom a graduate course that is offered at The College of New Jersey and Gratz College in Pennsylvania. He is also the author of Anti Bullying 101 a book designed to provide support to a schools anti bullying program.

In May of 2015 Jim was awarded the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters for his ongoing work in the area of anti bullying and classroom management.

Please visit his website/blog at www.bullyproofclassroom.com. Also visit Jim's Amazon author page at amazon.com/author/jhburns. He has two daughters: Sarah who is 24 and Grace who is 19. He lives at the New Jersey shore.

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