



SMART CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

A Radical Way To Transform Difficult Students

By **Michael Linsin** on April 29, 2017

So you have this student who disrupts your class every day.

They're a constant annoyance.

You spend more time dealing with them than any ten students put together.

You think about them in your off hours. You talk about them with your spouse.

They get under your skin like nothing else.

You [hold them accountable](#) and cycle them through your consequences day after day, but to little avail.

They improve for a couple of hours, maybe a day, and then it's right back where they started.

It's wearing on you, stressing you out, and affecting your enjoyment of the job.

You've tried everything, so it seems, and now you're at your wit's end.

Today, I'm going to offer you a radical solution.

It's a solution that at first glance seems almost too simple, but it sets in motion a series of changes within the student that can have a profound effect on their behavior.

It takes a bit of willpower, along with a mental hurdle you'll have to cross. But the results can be startling.

The way it works is that you're going to *change how you think* about the student.

You see, as the year goes on and you get more and more frustrated, negative thoughts about them are bound to seep in. Perhaps they've been there from the get-go.

It's normal, and understandable, to feel this way. Resentment can even grow outside of your conscious awareness.

Before you know it, this one student, and how much they get on your nerves, is consuming your thoughts.

Well, the big secret is that *they know how you feel about them*, even if you've done your Meryl-Streep best pretending otherwise.

Because it's something you can't hide.

Although you may have never raised your voice, scolded, or lectured this student, the subtle ways in which **you talk to them** and behave around them let's them know your true feelings.

They can see it in your eyes, your tight smile, and your closed body language. This isn't something they're necessarily consciously aware of.

But they know.

Children are astute, even psychic, judges of how adults perceive them. Far more than we give them credit for. Think of a time when you've met a baby or toddler for the first time, but weren't in the mood to coo and ah.

Despite your best acting efforts, and biggest, goofiest smile, they could feel your disingenuousness. You can see it in their eyes.

This is true no matter the grade level you teach.

When there is an absence of mutual [likability](#) between you and your most challenging students, you lose nearly all of your leverage to influence their behavior.

Because you don't matter to them. What you say, want, request, and advise doesn't matter to them. It's just an annoyance.

So what's the solution? How do you get them to listen to you and start behaving like just any other student in your class?

You choose to like them.

You make a conscious decision that, no matter what they do or how they behave or how many times they disrupt your class, you're going to see only the best in them.

You're going to change your thinking – which really is a choice, nothing more.

In fact, once you set aside your negative feelings about them, once you shrug off your resentment and decide to like them, you'll find that it isn't so difficult after all.

And here's the good news: Improvement will happen fast.

Students are quick to forgive and eager for someone to look up to. They're eager for a leader they can trust and follow and believe in.

So when you choose to see the best in them, when your smile is genuine and your interest in them is real, it changes everything. And they'll like you right back.

It triggers the Law of Reciprocity and causes in them a desire to please you and behave for you. Your words of praise, encouragement, and honest disappointment will mean something to them, deep down, where change happens.

This is leadership.

Few teachers have a genuinely good relationship with their most difficult students. But those who do are able to inspire lasting improvement. They're able to make an impact on those who've been written off, labeled, and merely tolerated.

They're able to do something no other teacher has been able to do.

And so are you.

By making one radical, beautiful choice