



When You Need To Be A Mean Teacher

by Michael Linsin

“Aren’t there some moments that call for lectures, admonishments, and the like?”

“Isn’t [raising your voice](#) and showing some anger at times the best thing you can do?”

“Don’t teachers have to show they mean business at least some of the time?”

In other words, does what students view as “being mean” have its place within the Smart Classroom Management approach?

The answer is, unequivocally . . .

No.

There is never a time when you need to be confrontational or intimidating.

Although it’s true that raising your voice and getting angry can quell misbehavior in the moment – because of a natural fear response – it’s never good for the long-term health of your classroom.

It only, *and always*, makes classroom management harder. This is true no matter where you teach, your grade level, or who your students are.

Because when you use negative methods two things will undoubtedly happen.

First, you’ll create friction with your students. You’ll create dislike and resentment, which very effectively weakens your means of [accountability](#).

You see, when your students don’t like you (often secretly), trust you, or enjoy being in your class, then your consequences won’t matter to them.

Your influence will be negligible, and the only reason why they’ll pay attention at all or give any effort is because of outside influences, like their parents, the prospect of college, or their intrinsic will.

But it won’t be because of you.

Difficult students, and students with learning, social, emotional, or attention difficulties, in particular, are the most negatively affected. They tend to regress, shut-down, and stop caring altogether rather than make any lasting improvement.

Second, you lighten the load of responsibility on your students.

To the degree you react emotionally to misbehavior (or poor effort), you shoulder the burden they should be carrying. The balance of remorse shifts away from them and onto you.

This is why in so many classrooms you see a haggard, stressed-out teacher and students gadding about without a care in the world.

But the plain truth is, *they* misbehaved, not you.

And in order for them to truly reflect on their mistakes, and resolve not to make them again, they need to feel their full weight. They need to sit and deal with their wrongdoing instead of blame or seethe in anger at you.

Furthermore, the guilt teachers feel using negative methods causes them to assuage it by doing too much for their students.

They talk them through every this and that. They kneel down to help one after another, interfering with effective independent work. They become hand-wringing micromanagers who do for students what they can and should do for themselves.

And as sure as the rising sun, these teachers are – or become – inconsistent, easily swayed, and manipulated in a misguided attempt to improve their relationship with students.

In so doing, they deny them the life-changing power of [shifting 100% of the responsibility](#) to listen, learn, and behave over to them.

Rise Above

Taking misbehavior personally, becoming vengeful, and showing displeasure is not only ineffective and remarkably stressful.

But it's childish.

It's childish because you are the *teacher*. You are the leader, tone-setter, and role model of the classroom who must reside on a different plane, above letting students get under your skin.

You must hold yourself to a higher standard. You must rise above and refuse to get dragged into arguments or succumb to hurt feelings and petty grievances.

You must take the high, graceful road that leads to joyful, effective teaching.

This one thing alone, when backed by a classroom management plan you rely on to handle *all* misbehavior, will not only make your teaching life so much easier and less stressful.

But it will give you true toughness and true leadership your students will respect and admire.