



SMART CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Why Forgiveness Is A Powerful Classroom Management Strategy

By Michael Linsin

It's easy to hold a grudge against difficult students.

It's our natural tendency; our default setting when someone angers us or hurts those we care about.

It's an extension of that initial surge of annoyance and frustration that comes over us when a student repeatedly disrupts a lesson, challenges our authority, or makes fun of a classmate.

But here's the thing:

The decisions you make in the seconds after these feelings hit separate those who struggle with classroom management and those who excel.

To be most effective, to not only curb misbehavior in the moment but to diminish the possibility of it happening again, you need a moment of pause.

You need a moment to take a deep breath and remind yourself that reacting emotionally is always a mistake.

Do this often and consistently enough and in time responding to misbehavior calmly, even matter-of-factly, will become a habit – so deeply ingrained that even a brief pause will no longer be needed.

Frustration and annoyance, however, don't simply dissipate into the clouds or become internalized into stress. No, they're *relieved*.

By allowing [your classroom management plan](#) to do its job, fulfill its intended purpose, and take the burden off of you, your classroom can be gloriously free of tension and resentment.

And you can be free to forgive.

Forgiveness, you see, in the form of complete and radical absolution of any and all past misbehavior – no matter how egregious – is a powerful classroom management strategy.

It has the power to soothe bitter, vengeful hearts, melt away heavily fortified walls of distrust, and turn your most challenging students into everyday members of your class.

It keeps you, your pleasant personality, and the all-important relationship you have with your students separate from your duty to hold them accountable. In other words, it allows you to demand the highest standards of behavior without causing friction or resentment.

So your students can both like and respect you.

Although forgiveness is a remarkable de-stressor, it isn't simply an internal, personal decision you make and keep to yourself. No, you must share it with your students.

You must show them through your quick smile and open, welcoming body language that every day is a new day and that the mistakes of the past are truly forgotten and gone forever.

Greeting your most challenging students with a kind word, being in their company with no strings attached, sharing a story with the one who spent the previous afternoon in time-out . . . these simple actions have power.

Radical forgiveness – that which is given fully and freely with no expectation of anything in return – can be a remarkable tonic for your classroom.

By ingraining a [calm, methodical approach to misbehavior](#), you learn to let go and forgive because it's right for your classroom. It's right for you and your career longevity. And it's right for those students who wear the label of "behavior problem" like a book-laden backpack slung over their shoulders.

Although forgiveness is a gift on the house, what you receive in return can be reason to springboard wide-eyed out of bed every morning.

The small, quiet, humble gestures of appreciation.

The fulfillment in *knowing* you're making a difference.

The life-lessons learned and passed on, rippling out to eternity