



Why Gentleness Is A Strong Classroom Management Strategy

By Michael Linsin on January 16, 2016

There is a common misconception that you must have a big presence to be an effective leader.

You must psych yourself up, throw your shoulders back, and move boldly among your students.

Your voice must boom.

Your walk must swagger.

Your eyes must squint and narrow in on your charges.

And while [classroom presence](#) is important, it isn't born of overconfidence, forcefulness, or aggression.

It's born of gentleness.

Here's why:

Gentleness is respected.

21st-century students respond best to a calm, even-handed approach to classroom management. They appreciate honesty and kindness. They respect it, and thus, are quick to listen and please their teacher.

The older the students are, the more this is true.

Gentleness lowers stress.

Without saying a word, a gentle presence removes classroom stress, tension, and anxiety. It soothes and alleviates [excitability](#) and distraction—which are two major causes of misbehavior.

It equals a happier, more productive classroom.

Gentleness curtails pushback.

Enforcing consequences calmly and consistently diminishes the possibility that your students will argue, complain, or lie to you about their misbehavior.

Instead, they'll quietly take responsibility.

Gentleness builds rapport.

When you carry yourself with a gentle demeanor, you become more likable to your students. In fact, it's an easy and predictable way to build powerful leverage, influence, and rapport.

Which makes *everything* easier.

Gentleness feels good.

Beginning each morning with a poised, easygoing manner will make you a lot happier. Inconveniences won't get on your nerves. Difficult students won't get under your skin.

You'll be refreshed at the end of every day.

Gentleness Isn't Weakness

Weakness is when you lose emotional control.

It's when you lecture, berate, and admonish students instead of [following your classroom management plan](#).

It's when you take misbehavior personally.

Gentleness, on the other hand, is strong. It's capable and confident. It says that you're in control and that your students can relax and focus on their responsibilities.

This doesn't mean your lessons won't be dynamic and passionate. It doesn't mean you won't be enthusiastic or you won't demand excellence from your students.

Gentleness isn't sleepiness. Nor is it afraid and cowering in a corner.

It's a calm, reassuring approach to managing your classroom that communicates to every student that you're a leader worth following.

Martin Luther King Jr. was gentle. So was Rosa Parks and Abraham Lincoln.

And so are the happiest and most effective teachers on earth.