Handouts to accompany

The Win-Win Classroom:
A Fresh and Positive Look at Instruction & Classroom Management

by Dr. Jane Bluestein

Presented for the Central East Alberta Teachers' Convention Association
March 9, 2017
Edmonton, AB

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- If you have any questions about anything on this page, or in these mateials, contact Dr. Bluestein at Instructional Support Services, 1709 Father Sky Ct NE, Albuquerque, NM, 87112, 505-323-9044, , or by email at jane@janebluestein.com.

Thank you for your consideration, and for spreading the word.

Definition:

"Win-Win"

...means changing the school culture:

- Establishing authority relationships that model respect for student needs *and* adult needs
- Minimizing reasons for acting out (prevention)
- Allowing students to "win" academically, by helping them achieve success and improve academic performance
- Encouraging commitment, cooperation and self-management in positive ways
- Building accountability and personal responsibility
- Eliminating power struggles (meeting students' needs for power, dignity and structure/limits)
- Building social skills and interactive competence
- Improving problem-solving and decision-making skills
- **Building relationships and connections**

Does NOT mean:

- Punishing, disempowering, exacting revenge
- Finding ways to get them out of class (or school)
- Continuing the cycle of failure
- Doing "business as usual" and expecting different results

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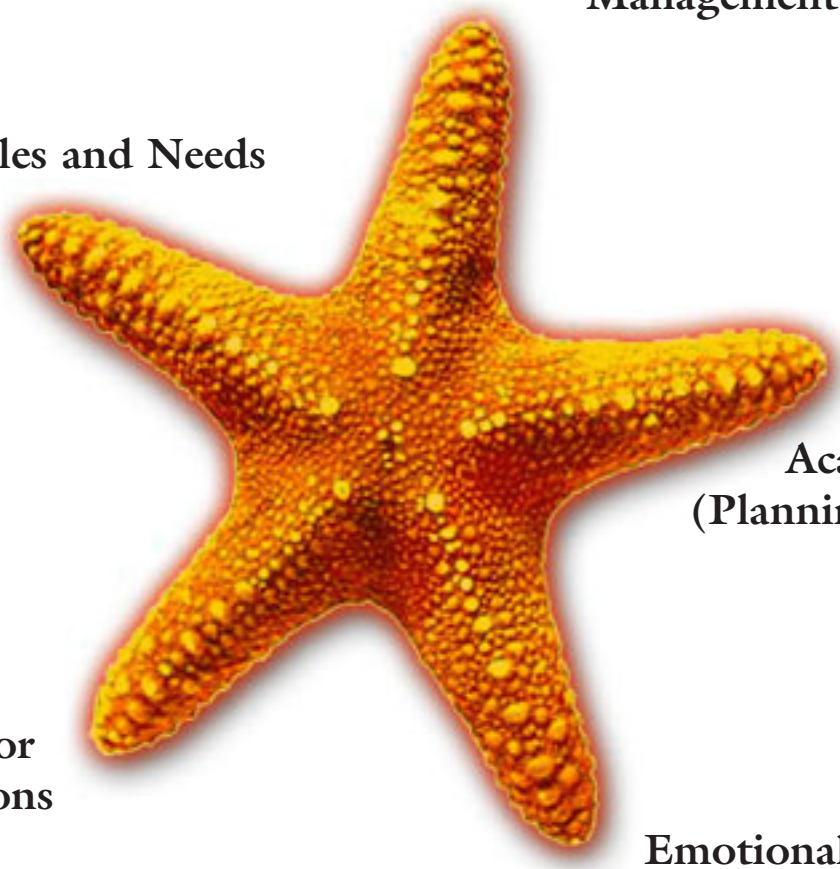
A multi-dimensional approach to building success, achievement, and cooperation

Power Dynamics, Discipline, and Behavior Management

Learning Styles and Needs (Body and Brain)



Academic Success (Planning, Placement)

Social Behavior and Interactions

Emotional Issues and Support

Classroom climate and relationships are key!

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Industrial Age
(Traditional Classroom)

Values, Priorities, and Motivators

- Uniformity, sameness; fitting in (standards)• Stability, permanence, security (rigid roles)
- Competition
- Motivation: approval-seeking, avoiding punishment, humiliation, rejection, disapproval; oriented to adult and adult's reaction
- Outcome- or product-orientation
- Black-and-white thinking

Skills: Student Behaviors that are Encouraged or Reinforced

- Following orders, obedience, people-pleasing, asking permission, compliance, dependence
- Listening
- Protecting existing power structure
- Not making waves; maintaining status quo
- Following (unquestioning)
- Dependence on leader (credit or blame)

Authority Relationships

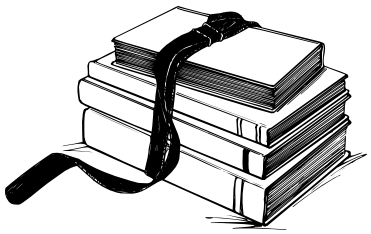
- Reactive
- Win-Lose (powering or permissive)
- Command-oriented; demands; few choices offered
- Student empowerment discouraged; initiative perceived as a threat to adult authority
- Rules and boundaries established to protect teacher power
- Approval of students conditional on students' cooperative, teacher-pleasing behavior
- Arrogance, self-centeredness, self-righteousness; "shoulds;" blame-oriented

Discipline Goal: Controlling Students, Disempowerment

- Students make few decisions, have few opportunities to act independently or self-manage
- Critical; focus on negative behavior and outcomes

Needs of the Economy: What Businesses Want

- Ability to "fit in," follow orders (chain of command), think inside the box, perform as directed; expectation that tasks/assignments would not vary much in one job description



Information Age
(Win-Win Classroom)

Values, Priorities and Motivators

- Diversity, personal potential and fulfillment
- Flexibility, choices, personal control
- Cooperation
- Motivation: personal satisfaction; curiosity; positive consequences or outcomes unrelated to adult's reaction; oriented to student
- Process- or person-orientation
- Many options and alternatives

Skills: Student Behaviors that are Encouraged or Reinforced

- Taking initiative, making decisions within limits of rules or boundaries; self-caring choices
- Communicating
- Networking, negotiating
- Taking risks, trying new things; innovating
- Initiative
- Assuming personal responsibility; teamwork

Authority Relationships

- Proactive, preventative
- Win-win (cooperative)
- Agreement- or negotiation-oriented; many choices may be offered
- Student empowerment encouraged within limits that respect everyone's rights
- Rules or boundaries established to protect everyone's rights, consider everyone's needs
- Acceptance of students regardless of their behavior
- No need to make student wrong for teacher to be right; respect for students' needs

Discipline Goal: Student Self-Control

- Students have opportunities to make decisions, act independently or self-manage
- Focus on positive behavior and outcomes

Needs of the Economy: What Businesses Want

- Higher priority on networking, people skills, communication skills, creative thinking ("outside the box") and problem solving, initiative, flexibility, adaptability; ability to multi-task, shift gears, change to shifting demands of the workplace; people with "vision and attitude."

What is school usually like for kids with "vision and attitude" and other skills desired by the 21st-century workplace?

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Ingredients of Effective Adult-Child Relationships:

Win-Win

Needs: Power, Autonomy, Control; *also* Limits and Structure

Alternative to win-lose (powering or permissiveness) and no-win.
The ability to get one's power needs met
without violating or disempowering anyone else.

An authority relationship in which one's authority (or power) is
used to decide what is and is not negotiable,
and within that structure, offer choices or negotiate options
that work for all concerned.

The ability to prevent and resolve conflict constructively.

The ability to make meaningful options available to students,
instead of using power, threats
or attempting to control and disempower;
a willingness to encourage cooperation instead of
obedience and people-pleasing.

An approach to interacting with others
that begins with the desire to effectively answer the question:
"How can we *both* (or *all)* get what we want."

The willingness to consider the needs and desires of others
before making decisions or demands that affect them.

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Motivating Cooperative Behavior

Win-Lose approaches that can compromise the emotional safety of the classroom:

POWERING: Win-Lose

Strategies:

- Humiliation, loss of dignity, violation of self-esteem; criticism, shaming, verbal/emotional violence
- Threat to physical safety, physical violence
- Conditional approval or love; threat of emotional abandonment
- Deprivation of meaningful privilege or activity (ex: recess, eligibility, graduation)

Dynamic/Outcomes:

- Depends on your reaction, power, anger and student's fear of your reaction
- May generate superficial compliance. Reinforces people-pleasing, dependence on approval or at least minimal cooperation to avoid being hurt in some way. Passive learning.
- Can inspire rebelliousness, particularly in students who aren't motivated by the need for your approval or the need to "save face."

Boundary Issues:

Does not respect students' boundaries or need for power; violates students' boundaries.

Effectiveness:

Can be effective in getting short-term cooperation from compliant students. Cost to emotional environment and quality of relationship between adult and student is HIGH.

PERMISSIVE: Lose-Win

Strategies:

- Allowing students to behave in ways that can create problems for you or others
- Letting kids have their way to avoid other conflicts
- Letting kids do something they want in order to obligate them to cooperate; attempt to motivate cooperation through guilt, by being "nice"
- Giving up; perception of having less influence or control than is true

Dynamic/Outcomes:

- Chaos, manipulation, lack of student self-management
- Tremendous insecurity when students' needs for limits are not met

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- Adult frustration, often ending up in reactive "blow-up" when you reach the end of your rope; encourages kids to really push the limits.

Boundary Issues:

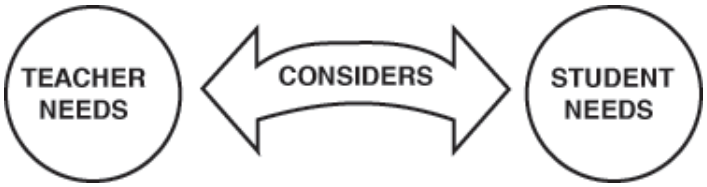
General lack of boundaries, unclear boundaries based on differences between teacher's understanding and students' understanding ("Be good." "Clean this area."), ambiguous boundaries, or boundaries with built in loop-holes (using warnings, asking for excuses, etc.)

Effectiveness:

Minimal; usually kids know that they don't have to listen until you start screaming, for example. Lack of limits and predictability makes cost to emotional environment and quality of adult-student relationship HIGH.

Win-Win approach that does not compromise the emotional safety of the classroom:

COOPERATIVE: Win-Win



Strategies:

- May include meaningful activities such as going to a center, self-selection, use of certain equipment, games, extra free time, time with adult, working with a friend, drawing, running an errand, a chance to help in another classroom; good grades (motivating for students who find grades meaningful) or a "good" note home; a "night off" from homework; etc. What's worked for you?
- May offer students a chance to choose between two or more activities, the sequence in which they do assignments, or choices about where, when, how, or with whom to do particular activities

Dynamic/Outcome:

- NOT based on adult's reaction, fear of adult's power, or need for approval
- Proactive approach that considers and attempts to accommodate the students' needs for both limits and power within those limits
- Clearly-communicated contingencies, boundaries, guidelines, limits before the students have a chance to mess up.
- Student needs for limits and control are accommodated as much as possible in an environment in which the teacher is still the authority
- Reward-oriented; focuses on positive outcomes to student (not externally based)
- Predictable (so long as boundaries are maintained); mutually respectful

Boundary Issues:

None. Boundaries are respected; communicated and upheld.

Effectiveness:

Best possibility for success of all configurations of authority

From The Win-Win Classroom, ***by Jane Bluestein, Ph.D. (Corwin Press). Original in*** Parents in a Pressure Cooker, ***by Jane Bluestein and Lynn Collins(Modern Learning Press, Rosemont, NJ, 1989).***

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Motivation & Response Strategies and Tools

Effective/Safe	*Ineffective/Unsafe*
• Building relationships and connections with students	• Discounting importance of connectedness
• Building a sense of community, mutual respect among students; developing and encouraging friendship and interaction skills; peer tutoring, mentoring	• Disregarding importance of community and interpersonal skills among students
• Boundaries	• Rules (and more rules)
• Focusing on *positive* outcomes or consequences: conditional (earned) access to privileges and activities	• Focus on punishments and negative consequences (even if logical)
• Attention to non-verbal cues, the energy in the classroom	• Inattention, disregard; "Just get busy."
• Emotional maturity, not reactive; ability to not take students' behavior personally; ability to keep a cool head; willingness to attack problems, not people	• Reactivity; tendency to take students' behavior personally; tendency to label students, criticize, make students wrong
• Unconditional acceptance of students, valuing them as people	• Conditional approval (dependent on people-pleasing behavior)
• Recognition	• Praise
• Offering students choices (within limits)	• Commands; limiting students' access to options; fear of student autonomy
• Providing clear instructions (in ways students can understand them)	• Lack of clear instructions; making assumptions about students' understanding or about how they process information
• Providing structure and routines	• Lack of structure and routines;
• Following through (immediately); withdrawing or withholding privileges when infractions occur	• Lack of immediate follow through; delaying follow through with warnings or asking for excuses

Adapted from **Becoming a Win-Win Teacher** *by Jane Bluestein, Ph.D. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Publishing, 2010) from two chapters on effective and ineffective (and dangerous) strategies for dealing with student behavior.*

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Motivation & Response Strategies and Tools *(cont'd)*

(Effective/Safe)	*(Inffective/Unsafe)*
• Asking for what you want; giving students information about what they need or need to do to be successful (get what they want)	• Telling students how their behavior makes you feel; labeling misbehavior
• Listening and validating students' emotional experiences	• Dismissing, ignoring, or interfering students' emotions; criticizing feelings; blaming students; trying to fix feelings or situation
• Expressing understanding of, concurrence (agreement) with students' emotional expression; defusing	• Reacting, criticizing, punishing; escalating
• Building problem-solving skills	• Giving advice or commands; rescuing; telling kids how to solve problems
• Controlling anger	• Depending on students' fear of your anger or disapproval
• Respect for students' dignity regardless of behavior	• Humiliation; yelling; verbal or physical violence against student
• Intentions	• Expectations
• Accommodating students' needs for success; matching instruction to cognitive ability; differentiating as necessary	• Following curriculum without regard for students' academic needs or abilities
• Meeting learning style needs; teaching the way kids learn	• Presenting material without regard for how students process information
• Modeling respectful and responsible behavior	• Expecting behavior from students that they do not see in you
• Handling misbehavior, keeping other adults (administration, parents) informed	• Relying on other adults to punish or intervene negative student behavior
• Building in flexibility (before there is a problem)	• Rigid application of rules; asking for excuses; giving warnings
• Being able to separate students' behavior from achievement	• Withholding credit or advancement from students who misbehave

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Guidelines for Offering Choices

- Choices build responsibility and commitment, and communicate the teacher's respect for students' needs and preferences.
- Choices, like boundaries, are motivational tools that encourage cooperation through input and empowerment. Offer choices in the absence of desirable student behavior, to encourage the student to perform a particular behavior he is not currently demonstrating.
- Choices can also help prevent disruptive behaviors, however other strategies will be suggested for intervening negative behavior or reinforcing performance, growth and existing positive behavior.
- Present available options in a positive manner. Be careful that the choice doesn't end up spoken as "do it or else."
- Be honest. Make sure that all options you offer are acceptable. Avoid setting the students up to people-please by choosing the right option or reading your mind. Make sure there are no wrong choices: If you don't want the student to choose something, don't make it an option. (For example, if you want them to do the outline first, offer sequence options about the other activities—after the outline is finished.)
- Make sure the choices you offer are clear and specific. Asking a child to ***"Select a meaningful learning activity,"*** leaves you open for some pretty broad interpretations. Instead, define choices with clearly-stated limits. ***"Select one meaningful learning activity from the five on the board"*** is much easier for the student to understand—and perform successfully.
- Start simple. If a student is having difficulty making decisions, it may be that there are too many options or that the limits are too broad or unclear.
- If a student is having difficulty with even a simple choice, add another limit if necessary, by asking him to choose within a certain amount of time (after which you get to help him choose). Be patient. Some young students and well-conditioned order-takers need time and practice to develop confidence in their ability to choose.
- Increase options as the students can handle them, either by widening the range of choices you offer or by making the options more complex.
- Depending on your goals, schedule and resources, you might leave room for students to change their minds if they are disappointed with a choice they've made. If time and management require the student to make a choice and stick with it, make that clear when you present the available options. Reassure the students that they can ***"try again later (or tomorrow or next week)."***
- As they become more capable, encourage the students to participate in setting up choices (or negotiate an alternative assignment, for example) whenever possible. Clear limits are especially important in such cases; you might also want to suggest that they present their ideas to you for a final OK before they act.
- If students suggest a choice that you think is inappropriate, tell them your concerns and ask if they can come up with another idea. (Stating *s* is a terrific way to get this message across without attacking the student.) Reiterate your criteria if necessary. If something is just plain non-negotiable, say so, but help the student look for acceptable options available within those limits.

Adapted from **The Win-Win Classroom: A Fresh and Positive Look at Classroom Management**, *by Jane Bluestein, Ph.D. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2008).*

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5 Characteristics of a Good Boundary*

- **Clarity:** Boundaries are clear, specific and clearly communicated. They work best when you have the students' attention, when they understand what you're requesting, when the positive outcome of their cooperation is clear and when specific requirements, conditions or time factors are spelled out. For example, ***"I'll read for the last 10 minutes of class as long as you're quiet."*** (or, ***". . . if your desks are cleared.")***
- **Win-win:** Boundaries respect and consider the needs of everyone involved. They attempt to create ways for both you and your students to get what you want. For example, ***"You can take another library book home as soon as you return the ones you borrowed last week,"*** or ***"I want to hear about this problem. I'll be free to give you my full attention as soon as I give the reading group their assignments."***
- **Proactivity**: Boundaries work to prevent problems and are typically expressed before a problem occurs or before it is allowed to continue (or get worse). For example, ***"You can use this equipment as soon as you can demonstrate how to use it correctly." "Let's stay quiet in the hall so we don't disturb any of the other classes."***
- **Positivity:** The most effective boundaries typically focus on the positive outcomes of cooperation. They are also expressed positively, as promises rather than threats or simply as information (with the implication that the positive outcome is available, for example, until a certain time or under certain conditions). For example, ***"If you do your homework 10 days in a row, you can have the 11th day off (or do for extra credit),"*** or ***"The art center closes at 2:00."***
- **Follow through:** Follow through—allowing a positive consequence to occur only when the child does what you've asked—is what communicates that you mean what you say and you say what you mean. It increases the likelihood that your students will take you seriously when you ask for what you want, and it improves the chances that they will cooperate as well (if it's really the only way they can get what they want).**

*Boundaries are tools for building cooperation in relationships, for letting others know what you want and for letting them know which options are available to them (for getting what they want). Set boundaries when you want behaviors to change and wish to avoid negative, stressful behaviors such as nagging, yelling, threatening or punishing to get what you want. Whether you use boundaries in relationships with children or other adults, the characteristics of boundaries and dynamics of boundary setting are the same.

**Boundaries allow you to follow through without even getting angry! Follow-through works wonders, but it requires patience, faith, consistency and courage!

☛ The Power of Positive Consequences

Sounds like:

- "If you do this, you can…"
- "When you finish, you can…"
- "As long as you (comply with this condition), you can…"

Benefits of emphasizing positive consequences:

- Less stress in interaction
- Reduces likelihood of opposition or refusal
- Puts responsibility on child

Based on information from The Parent's Little Book of Lists: Do's and Don'ts of Effective Parenting, ***by Jane Bluestein, Ph.D. (Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc. 1997) and*** The Win-Win Classroom, ***also by Jane Bluestein, Ph.D. (Corwin Press, 2008).***

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Homework Options: No More Excuses

- Requesting a certain percentage of assignments be turned in on time: ***"You are responsible for 37 out of 40 of the assignments you'll be getting this semester."*** BONUS: Giving extra credit for any of the extras that are turned in, even if late!
- Giving some token for one free "excuse" which does not need any explanation for its use: ***"Here is a*** 'Get Out of Jail Free' ***card which you can use if you forget your homework any time during the semester."*** BONUS: Not requiring kids to actually SHOW the card to get off the hook.
- Giving kids a break after a certain number of assignments are completed: ***"If you turn in completed homework 10 days in a row, you can have the next night off (or you can do the work for extra credit)."***
- Having a specific date for assignments to be turned in. (Similar to deadlines used in many college classes, may work best for specific assignments or projects, or with advanced level classes and self-managing kids.) ***"As long as you get your homework in two weeks before the end of the grading period, you'll get credit for it."***
- Not counting one or more missed assignment, or the lowest score on a series of assignments or quizzes, for example: ***"You can drop your lowest grade each semester."***
- Extending daily deadlines beyond the end of class, giving kids until the end of the following day to turn in work: ***"You have until the 3:30 bell*** tomorrow ***to turn in this assignment."***

6 Reasons to Not Ask Why*

- It focuses on excuses rather than commitment.
- It assumes the student knows why he did it (or forgot) and can adequately explain his reasons to you.
- It suggests that your boundaries and limits are flexible if your students have a good enough excuse: ***"If you're creative (or pathetic) enough, you're off the hook."***
- It puts you in the position of having to judge the "validity" of your student's excuses and arbitrarily decide whether or not to hold her accountable.
- If you've got a good boundary with a positive outcome, if your students are developmentally able to do what you've asked and if they have had enough time, training or reminders (ahead of time) to succeed, ***why*** doesn't matter—the positive outcome is simply not available until the students change their behavior or fulfill their commitments.
- It may give you ammunition to attack or shame the student ***("You should have thought of that before," "You should have known better," "How could you have been so stupid?")*** instead of using the occasion as an opportunity for the child to make more responsible choices and correct his or her behavior.

*This title refers to not asking for excuses by asking kids to explain why they did something wrong or forgot to do something they were supposed to do (or had agreed to do).

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Some Kids Really Do Study Better When...

There are several ways to change or maintain our level of alertness and attentiveness. Even if your study habits are different from your children's, it is possible that they will be able to concentrate and learn by using some of the following options. Watch for consistency of completion and quality of work. If either start to drop, remember the phrase, "This isn't working," and be willing to suggest other strategies! (Think "trial-and-error" and stay positive!)

- Listening to music
    - With headphones; without headphones
    - Various types (Thomas Armstrong, author of *The Myth of the ADD Child,* suggests that some kids are more focused and less hyperactive when listening to loud rock music. Note: It's OK to restrict music with "mean or obscene" lyrics.)
- Accommodating lighting needs
    - Availability of natural light
    - Preference for subdued light
    - Avoidance of fluorescent lights (can increase hyperactivity and irritability in some individuals)
    - Use of colored acetate (EZC Readers) to reduce glare and improve focus (colored acetate over text; reduces contrast of black text on white paper)
- Chewing, munching (Note: Watch for food allergies and sensitivities!)
- Moving, stretching, rocking
- Hydrating (drinking water)
- Changing seats
    - Sprawling out on the bed, couch or floor
    - Using a different kind of seat (therapy ball, bean bag chair, chair with arms
    - Putting a bungee cord or heavy-duty rubber band around the front legs of the chair at your child's desk or work space
- Working alone, working with a friend or study partner; going over work with you
- Tactile anchor (when doing a listening activity; focusing in class)
    - Beanbag, stress ball, other "fidget" toy
    - Less obvious: string, piece of clay, twist-tie, pipe cleaner; velcro (can stick to underside of desk)
    - Drawing, doodling

Many of these suggestions have come from various occupational therapists, physical therapists, kinesiologists, and special education teachers, among others. Their sources include research, books and workshops focusing on the needs of non-traditional learners, as well as contributions from workshop participants and web site visitors.

For more information, see* The Win-Win Classroom *(Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2008) and* Creating Emotionally Safe Schools: A Guide for Educators and Parents *(Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc., 2001). both by Jane Bluestein, Ph.D.

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Ways to Improve the School's Social Culture

- Increase awareness, advocacy and a willingness to take ***immediate, positive*** action (regarding how kids treat one another).

- Use conflicts as opportunities to teach, build interactive skills and positive attitudes/beliefs about others (rather than simply punishing violators).

- Build problem solving skills. (Ask, don't tell.)

- Build social skills or friendship skills as needed.

- Build emotional intelligence, resilience, self-control.

- Model tolerance, respect (avoid double standards).

- Work to deglamorize and eliminate elitist status of certain students over others. (Value ***all*** students, holding a wider range of possible contributions in high regard.)

- Provide opportunities for service.

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What's Wrong With "I- Messages"?

by Jane Bluestein, Ph.D.

Description:

Formula for expressing feelings in conjunction with another person's behavior: *"When you _____, I feel _____ (and I want you to _____)."* in order to get the other person to act differently.

Problems:

- They are still "You" messages, literally (verbally) and energetically, carrying a message of blame: Your emotional state is the fault of someone else's behavior. ("Victim" talk.)
- They put the responsibility for your feelings and emotional well-being on someone else.
- They assume that the other person is invested in your emotional well being and would be willing to change his or her behavior to care-take you. This is especially not true of typical playground or hallway social dynamics.
- They give a great deal of power to someone who may not have your best interests at heart, someone who may, in fact, be hoping to cause you discomfort, embarrassment, inconvenience or pain.
- If someone's intention is, indeed, to hurt you, "I messages" tell that person that his or her strategies for doing so are effective and, in fact, working!
- Few child relationships have (or should have) the intimacy required for dealing with the emotional impact of behaviors—and such intimacy is neither necessary nor relevant for generating cooperative, respectful behavior.
- Kids who are willing to change their behavior so other people won't feel sad or angry often have a hard time making good decisions on their own behalf. Their behavior tends to be other-motivated and people-pleasing, patterns which carry their own dangers and risks.
- There are other, better ways to generate cooperation from others, regardless of their personal feelings for you

Alternatives:

- Dealing with confrontation by "agreeing" and changing the subject
- Requesting different behavior (or that a certain behavior stop): *"Pleasse stop kicking my chair." "I don't like that word. Please don't use it around me." "Please don't touch the stuff on my desk."* (No need to justify or explain why.)
- Stating a preference: *"I don't care to discuss that."* (And then cheerfully change the subject, redirect discussion.)
- Set a boundary, using a promise with a positive consequence: *"I don't play with people who call me names." "I don't date people who hit." "I'll be happy to continue this discussion when you stop yelling at me."*
- Simply refusing to engage or respond is also appropriate in some instances.

Free article on my Web site, What's Wrong with "I-Messages"?: *http://janebluestein.com/2013/whats-wrong-with-i-messages/*

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Ways to Increase Positivity in School

- Offer positive feedback
  - Keep the focus on the positive (Let kids know what they've done right and teach them the rest.)
  - Allow "do-overs" to correct mistake, get full credit
  - Build on strengths (vs. criticize weaknesses, mistakes, errors, flaws, omissions, etc.)
- Eliminate double standards (Subtle but powerful message communicated when we "walk the talk," modeling behaviors, language, tone, attitudes we want from kids.)
- Change threats to promises, focusing on the positive outcomes of their cooperation or performance
- Think: *Consequences = POSITIVE outcomes* (Energetically, everything else is punitive, even if logical. Really.)
- Reinforce with recognition rather than praise. Rather than talking about the student being good or making you happy, use a 2-part statement which:
  - Describes the behavior: *"You brought your library book back!"*
  - Tells the student the positive outcomes of this choice: *"Now you can take another one home."*
- Let parents know about the good stuff!
- Maintain your sense of humor!

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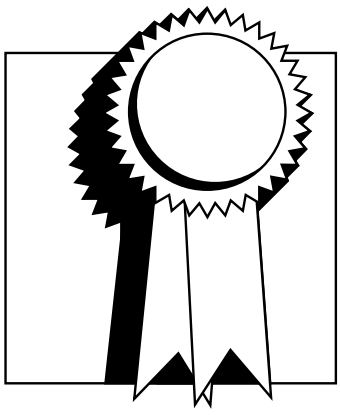
Guidelines for Reinforcing Positive Behavior

- Use positive reinforcement—verbal or non-verbal (interactive, token or activity)—to acknowledge and strengthen ***already-existing*** behaviors. Avoid attempting to use reinforcement ***before*** the desired behavior has occurred. (Use different strategies to motivate the student to *initiate* a desired behavior [promise a meaningful positive consequence for cooperation] or to *intervene* a disruptive behavior [withdraw or withhold a privilege or positive consequence].)
- Watch for a tendency to use praise to help a student solve a problem or feel good about himself. Flattery can appear manipulative even to a young or needy student. Such messages are superficial at best and will not contribute to the student's genuine sense of self-worth.
- Avoid praising one child (or group) to motivate others. "I like the way Bobby is sitting" only serves to reinforce Bobby (and may, in fact, back-fire if Bobby isn't happy about the attention), promising conditional approval to others when they, too, sit.
- Avoid using teacher approval as a means of reinforcing desired behavior. Learn to distinguish between reinforcers intended to maintain a particular student behavior and genuine expressions of appreciation, affection or enjoyment of your students. In a win-win classroom, behaviors such as a smile, touch, nod or wink—which obviously communicate the fact that the teacher is pleased—are not used as expressions of conditional approval or caring. Although they may sometimes be used as reinforcers, such behaviors may also appear randomly, regardless of the student's performance or behavior, as expressions of appreciation or affection.
- Phrase reinforcements as an affirmation or acknowledgement of a behavior the student has demonstrated and the positive consequences now available (not as "if . . . then" statements, which are more useful for motivating behavior that has not yet been demonstrated). Reinforcements may be effectively communicated in either oral or written form.
- To reinforce a desirable behavior, first ***describe*** the behavior that took place. Be specific and concrete and avoid making judgments about the behavior or the worth of the student.



Adapted from **The Win-Win Classroom**, *by Jane Bluestein, Ph.D. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2008).*

- Secondly, whenever possible, attach a comment that ***connects*** the immediate benefits of the student's behavior to the student. (Occasionally, it may be appropriate to state the positive outcomes in terms of their benefits to the group.) Focus on the payoff for the student, making sure the outcome is positive and meaningful. Avoid projecting your own feelings and values, which may or may not be relevant to those of the student, or suggesting how the student should feel.
- Look for the positive. You can almost always find something to recognize in any performance. Reinforce what was done right and work to correct or improve the rest.
- Perhaps because of the rigidity of roles during the factory-era, there was a tendency for teachers to recognize certain behaviors in boys (such as strength, mechanical skill, and ability in math and the sciences) more frequently than girls (who are more often reinforced for neatness, creativity, attractiveness, and writing and artistic abilities). In recognizing students, be aware of any tendencies to promote stereotypes.

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Success with Students' Parents

Parents and guardians can provide a great deal of support and reinforcement. For the most part, they want to know what's happening in school, how their children are doing and how they, the parents, can help. They tend to be far more enthusiastic and positive in their support when they feel informed and included, when they feel welcomed in our classrooms, and when their interest in their children's well-being is respected. Unfortunately parent-teacher relationships rarely attain their maximum potential. Often both parties complain of a lack of contact unless there's a problem. If this has indeed been the case with the parents of your students, imagine how effective a more positive approach can be! Here are a few ideas that might help:

- Get acquainted early in the year, either by note, phone, in-school conferences, welcome meetings or home visits. Keep first meetings positive.
- Keep parents informed about your policies and goals. If you have certain specific requirements about how you want work done, when assignments are due, or other boundaries or follow-through intentions they may have some questions about, let them know ahead of time.
- Keep them informed about your classroom projects and practices. For example: If you are doing a special program, or allowing new behavior options—like leaving the class to work in the library or sitting on the floor to read or do special assignments—let the parents know.
- **Maintain regular positive contact.** ***Best bet:*** A weekly progress report that focuses on responsible learning behaviors necessary for success in the classroom. (Sample below.) Having the students (or one student) put the names on the forms will leave you free to quickly fill in the progress. I have found that these reports work best when we only mark the skills that had indeed been demonstrated (only positive marks, rather than "grading" each skill) and when we make sure that each student gets at least three stars or smiley faces every week. (I frequently checked all 5, as often as possible!) Made a point, when you can, to write a few words on the back or bottom of the form—always something positive! ***"Doing great in math!" "Self-control is improving." "Great sense of humor!" "Very helpful and caring with other students."*** *"I love teaching your child."* The little time you put in will pay off in a big way.
- Make positive "surprise" contact. Example: An unanticipated phone call or note home about something special that happened or something that you noticed. These calls don't need to take more than a minute. Pick one class that really needs a lot of encouragement. Attempt to get back to the parents of ***each*** child in the class—say once a month, or even once a semester.
- Create (or supervise the creation of) a monthly newsletter. Be sure to include samples of the students' work—including ***all*** students in some way during the course of the year. Tell about new projects, guests, field trips or special events. You might also include reviews of parenting resources, parenting tips and ideas, and/or excerpts from books, magazines or web sites (be ***sure*** to reference them correctly).
- PROOFREAD all correspondences that go home or, better yet, have someone else check for spelling, punctuation, grammatical and even format errors. Make sure your correspondences reflect your care and professionalism.

Name	**For week of:**
Takes care of materials	
Is caught up on all homework assignments	
Is caught up on all seatwork assignments	
Says "please" and "thank you"	
Raises hand before speaking	
Signed	

Based on material in Dr. Bluestein's books, **Being a Successful Teacher** *(Fearon Teacher Aids, Frank Schaffer Publishing, Torrance, CA.) and* **The Win-Win Classroom** *(Corwin Press, 2008.)*

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- Invite parents to visit your classroom, to see your class in action, to help out or to share their own expertise in some area.
- Be respectful of constraints on parents' time. Begin and end meetings on time.
- If a student is experiencing difficulty, either with the work or social behavior, or if the student is demonstrating behaviors that are interfering with her potential success in school, get in touch with the parents right away. Don't allow yourself to be placed in the embarrassing position of having to explain why you didn't contact the parents until the behavior became enough of a problem to affect the student's grades, progress or placement.
- IF THERE IS AN INCIDENT, call only to ***report*** what happened. Watch your tone and any tendency to judge. Stick to the behavior—what you ***saw***—rather than trying to interpret or analyze the child's intent. Avoid blaming or criticizing, or judgments about personalities, character or values that might leave parents feeling defensive, protective, shamed, anxious, angry or resentful.
- When reporting an incident watch the tendency to suggest that this is the parent's problem or demand that they solve it ***for*** you. ***Best bet:*** Describe the problem and how you plan to deal with it. You might ask for input or suggestions, but avoid asking the parent to "talk to him" or punish him for you. Offer to follow up in a few days (and then make sure that you do). Remember, if you've been maintaining positive contact, regularly sharing what the child has been doing ***well*** and building a positive, respectful relationship with parents all along, you're much more likely to find them much more supportive when there's a problem.
- You have specialized knowledge that makes you qualified for your line of work. Do not use that knowledge against the parent by using jargon or talking down to him or her.
- Work with parents toward a mutual goal: the child's success and well-being in school. Do not presume to care more about the student than the parent does.
- Do not speak ill of coworkers, the administration or other students, teachers or parents. At all times, keep your actions and interactions professional.
- If confronted with an angry parent, STAY CALM and maintain your boundaries. Speak softly if they speak loudly. Acknowledge the parent's anger as well as how important it is for you to hear what he or she has to say. If you need to, suggest going to an appropriate place for this kind of discussion. Encourage the parent to talk about what's going on and LISTEN! Try to avoid getting defensive or making the parent wrong for being upset. If you feel the least bit threatened, make sure to include (or call for) another teacher, administrator or support staff. It is OK for parents to get angry and blow off steam. It is ***not*** OK for anyone to use their anger as an excuse to violate you!
- Watch out for requests from parents for you to punish a child in the classroom for misbehaviors that happened at home. It is neither appropriate nor necessary for you to withhold privileges for events you did not witness, although you can suggest resources or classes for parents who are having problems and seem open to receiving such information.
- DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT. Keep track of all contact with parents in which you have shared important information or discussed a student's progress or behavior. Note the date, the purpose of the call, the parent's response and the outcome. Alert administrators to problems you may be having. Also make a note to follow up as necessary and then do so.

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Guidelines for Handling Negative Behavior

- ***Think prevention.*** Although no one can predict every possible opportunity for disaster, many problems can be avoided by taking the time to anticipate what you and your students will need, considering any possibility for misunderstandings or difficulties and setting very specific limits ahead of time.

- When something comes up, try to isolate what's bothering you. Are you reacting to a personality trait or value conflict, or is the student's behavior actually interfering with the teaching or learning process?

- ***Attack the problem, not the person.*** Mentally separate the student from the behavior. It's the interruption that's annoying—not the student.

- Minimize your reaction. Count to ten, or at least to five. Use this time to remind yourself that you don't have to get angry, lecture, criticize, interrogate or punish. (Often, you don't even have to get involved!) Staying calm can help you avoid compounding the problem at hand. A brief pause can also allow the student to resolve or correct the problem behavior on his own.

- Deal specifically with the behavior—not the morality of the behavior, previous incidents or the personality behind the misconduct.

- If your reaction starts to create a win-lose (or no-win) situation, stop and back off: ***"Wait. This isn't the way I want to handle this."*** If necessary—and possible—withdraw for a few seconds to regain your perspective.

- At all times, stay responsible for your actions and words. We are most vulnerable to negative adult behavior patterns in the presence of negative or disruptive student behaviors. Regardless of our commitment to maintaining a positive, win-win environment, there will be times we will most likely slip up and say or do something hurtful or destructive. At those times, be careful to model responsible language and not blame the student. For example, avoid statements like, ***"You make me so angry,"*** or ***"If you hadn't done that I wouldn't have said that to you."*** If you act or speak in a hurtful way, apologize and switch to more a constructive approach—just like you would want the student to do!

- Look for ways to offer many choices and positive outcomes for cooperation, building in incentives and motivators. This is a proactive and positive approach that will eliminate many of the incidents that arise when students are competing for power.

- Withdraw the privilege or positive consequence as soon as a misconduct occurs. Keep your tone and body language as neutral as possible. (A statement like ***"This isn't working"*** can help you intervene decisively without attacking or criticizing.)

Adapted from **The Win-Win Classroom: A Fresh and Positive Look at Classroom Management**, *by Jane Bluestein, Ph.D. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2008).*

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- Whenever possible, invite the student to reclaim his privilege or possession as soon as the misbehavior ceases: ***"You may return to the group as soon as you can control your talking," "You can continue playing with this game as soon as you finish cleaning up the area you just left."***

- If correcting his behavior will not give the student immediate access to the privilege or possession, let him know when it will be available again: ***"Please return to your seats. Let's try (working together) again tomorrow,"*** or ***"Please put the puzzle back on the shelf until you finish your seatwork."***

- Provide support, feedback, guidelines and limits to help, but leave the responsibility for the student's behavior with the student.

- If instruction and activities would help in areas such as problem solving, social interaction, or handling anger and frustration, for example, save them for a non-crisis setting. Likewise, if you feel that you and your students could benefit from the administration or support staff (counselor, school psychologist, social worker), invite them to conduct or participate in these activities. These individuals may also be available to discuss particular problems and help you brainstorm possible win-win solutions, and will be especially helpful when you can provide documentation and don't attempt to dump the responsibility for the problem on them.

- In problem-solving activities and discussions, keep coming back to win-win: ***"How can we both get what we want?"***

Intervention Strategies

Behavior	***Productive (Positive, Desirable)***	***Non-Productive (Neutral, Non-disruptive)***	***Counter-Productive (Negative, Disruptive)***
Intervention Strategy	Positive Reinforcement/ Recognition	Contingency Contracting, Offering Choices	Follow-through; loss of privilege (positive consequence); new boundary
Goal	Maintaining existing behavior, improving the likelihood of behavior recurring on its own	Encouraging more cooperative, more productive behavioral choices; building commitment	Stopping negative behavior; replacing with cooperative, non-disruptive behavior
Process	1. Describe the behavior 2. Connect to positive outcome	Connecting what you want to what the student wants; making productive behavior more desirable	Might include: • remove or delay access to positive consequence • ask student to ***stop***, change behavior • present acceptable alternative • use promises (set new contingency)
Caution	Avoid praise that connects behavior to worth. ***"I really like you when..." "You're good because..."*** Avoid praise that reinforces dependence on approval: ***"I like the way..."***	Motivators must be need fulfilling to be effective. This will vary from student to student. Motivators must also appear accessible (immediate enough). Avoid using conditional approval as a motivator. Avoid depending on your students' fear of your anger or power to motivate their cooperation.	Once limits have been violated, follow through immediately. Avoid warnings, reminders after the fact. Do not ask for excuses. Instead, ask what the student plans to do to correct the situation. Avoid punishing, moralizing, giving advice or solutions, making excuses or taking responsibility for the student's problem. Avoid making the child wrong; accept the student, ***not*** the behavior.

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Examples of Some New Ways of Thinking

Old Messages	*New Messages*
If only my students (or kids, spouse, boss, parents, the government, etc.) would change, my life would be better.	If my current behaviors (or thinking patterns) aren't working for me, I am willing to change them.
Other people's actions, words and attitudes create my feelings and determine my behaviors, words, attitudes and feelings.	My ***reaction*** to other people's actions, words and attitudes creates my feelings. I am responsible for my feelings and actions.
This is just the way I am.	I always have choices about my own behavior, language and attitudes.
Sometimes you have to get angry, helpless or sad in order to get people to do what you want.	I avoid using my feelings to try to change or control other people.
I am responsible for the behavior, performance and appearance of others (for example, students, children, employees, spouse, etc.)	I can guide, reflect and support others and still leave them responsible for their own behavior—and also respect their right to make their own choices.
My house (or classroom), my rules. Or: My way or the highway.	We all live (or work) here together. While I may have the final say in many situations, your needs, preferences and feelings matter to me.
When other people hurt or disappoint me, I have the right to hurt back or try to make them feel guilty.	I can take care of myself without deliberately hurting or manipulating others.
If someone hurts me or someone I love, I have to get revenge to maintain my honor.	I have the right to state my opinions and stand up for myself and others without hurting anyone.
If you really cared about me, you'd put my needs first.	Self-abandonment is not loving behavior. Take care of yourself.
I will do my best to take care of others. If they're happy, I'm happy.	I will do my best to take care of myself and still consider other people's needs and feelings.
It's important that other people have high opinions of me. I am willing to do whatever I can to control their impression or opinion of me.	What others think of me is none of my business.
I don't care how you treat me, as long as you love me and never leave.	I don't care if you love me, just treat me right. (Or: I will not tolerate abusive behavior, no matter how you feel about me.
Peace at any price.	I am willing to risk conflict, loss and even abandonment in order to take care of myself.

If the "new" messages characterize the way you operate in relation to others, your relationships are probably pretty healthy, although certainly not conflict-free. If the old messages are all too familiar, chances are you're experiencing stresses in your relationships which could be minimized or even eliminated. There is a better way.

Adapted from Parents, Teens & Boundaries: How to Draw the Line, ***by Jane Bluestein, Ph.D. (Health Communications, Inc., Deerfield Beach, FL, 1993).***

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