

PROMOTING RESPONSIBILITY & LEARNING AT ELIOT RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Monthly Newsletter by Marvin Marshall

Companion to

<http://www.DisciplineWithoutStress.com>

Volume 8, Number 9

September 2008

Distributed to 15,006 subscribers

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1. WELCOME

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MONTHLY DISCIPLINE AND LEARNING QUOTE:

Why is classroom management (procedures) so important?

1) If you don't have good management, you will have (to a greater or lesser degree) chaos. You can't teach someone to be SELF-disciplined in the midst of chaos. Simple as that!

2) The discipline approach itself is actually based on handling most discipline problems by helping the undisciplined students with procedures to keep themselves in control. It's hard to help someone else create effective procedures if you aren't doing it well yourself.

--Kerry Weisner

The foundation of the RAISE RESPONSIBILITY SYSTEM (Part III of the DISCIPLINE WITHOUT STRESS TEACHING MODEL) is to be PROACTIVE by teaching BEFORE problems occur.

Some people truly understand how teaching the hierarchy can have amazing results. Kerry is one of those perceptive people. SHE DOES NOT FOCUS ON "DISCIPLINE." In fact she never even refers to this term.

Notice the title: The RAISE RESPONSIBILITY SYSTEM.

Referring to any discipline approach--and announcing consequences for irresponsible behaviors BEFORE they occur--infers that students will misbehave. This is a NEGATIVE APPROACH. Schools that insist on having teachers post consequences are not doing a service to themselves, teachers, students, or parents. KNOWING WHAT WILL HAPPEN AHEAD OF TIME enables the student to measure in advance the desired behavior against the consequence: "Will the behavior be more fun than the consequence?" NOT KNOWING IS FAR MORE EFFECTIVE IN PREVENTING IRRESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR. Whispering in a misbehaving student's ear, "Don't worry what will happen; we'll talk about it later," immediately redirects the student's attention, stops the disruption, eliminates teacher stress, and takes no time away from instruction.

Read ineffective and counterproductive approaches at http://www.marvinmarshall.com/counterproductive_practices.htm.

Back to how Kerry uses the hierarchy.

She thinks of the HIERARCHY as an OPPORTUNITY for YOUNG PEOPLE TO HAVE A RUBRIC OR REFERENCE FOR MAKING DECISIONS IN LIFE.

She focuses on #8 of the "Significant Points of The Hierarchy of Social Development." Studying these points will enhance your understanding and effectiveness in using the hierarchy. You will find it worth your while to download the one-page at http://www.marvinmarshall.com/pdf/hierarchy_significant_points.pdf

NOTE: As with all pdf's (portable document format), if you have difficulty printing it, move the document to your desktop; then print it.

DISCIPLINE WITHOUT STRESS (DWS), INC. has now distributed free books to all certificated staff members and a free staff development package to schools in eight of the United States.

The school need not be in a low economic area. As long as the USA school has a student who could be classified as "low economic," the entire school can qualify.

The application can be downloaded at
<http://www.disciplinewithoutstress.org/>

My travels the last week in August took me coast to coast--from the Bronx Guild High School, in the Bronx, New York to Stoner Avenue School with the Los Angeles Unified School District, near Marina del Rey Middle School where I formerly taught.

I always enjoy visiting the "Big Apple" since I used to travel there on a regular basis when I had a three-year contract with the New York City Board of Education assisting schools in Harlem and in Upper Manhattan. The Bronx Guild High School is located at the Adlai Stevenson High School building, which now has six different focused schools in the plant. New York is not only focusing on how to differentiate instruction, it is differentiating its schools. The Bronx Guild High School is part of a growing network of "Big Picture Schools" at
<http://www.bigpicture.org/schools/index.htm#>.

Returning to one of my old school areas with the Los Angeles Unified School District is always gratifying. My most emotional decision in education was leaving the Los Angeles district that had given me so many opportunities--including teaching grades 7 - 12, being a demonstration teacher, department chair, counselor, athletic director, assistant to the dean, instructional coordinator, and the director of a school within a school.

I moved from Los Angeles and took on principalship experiences at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Returning to the classroom after 24 years gave me a unique perspective that led to developing my approach. The three phases of the RAISE RESPONSIBILITY SYSTEM stem directly from developing a proactive approach (TEACHING), Checking for Understanding (ASKING, from my counseling experiences) and Guided Choices (ELICITING, from my administrative experiences).

Pam Williams, Principal at Stoner Avenue School, wrote after my presentation, "Thank you again for the awesome professional development." Sam Decker, Principal, and Jeff Palladino, Co-Director of the Bronx Guild High School wrote, "Dr. Marshall's approach helped us build our student body to become capable of motivating themselves and taking personal responsibility for their decisions. We have had the smoothest opening of a school year to date; our work with him was a key factor in helping that happen. I recommend to

anyone who works with young people that they jump at the opportunity to work with Dr. Marshall."

Everything I presented at both the New York high school and the Los Angeles elementary school is in the In-House Staff Development at http://www.marvinmarshall.com/In_House_Package.html

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2. PROMOTING RESPONSIBILITY

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QUESTION:

I have been using DWS in grade one for a year. I didn't quite win over the rest of the staff last year. They were not ready to give up rewards and praise. However, my principal is now gung ho. He is going to push it this year.

He would like to design a form for the students that requires consequences. It is very important to him for the parents to be kept informed of their children's behavior at school since we are a team with the home.

Up until now, each teacher has had their own discipline form. My principal wants one form to be used by all staff. He suggested that it include the offence, the student's response and a list of possible consequences, plus blank lines for additional suggestions. It is very important to him that the students learn responsibility for their actions, and that they make good choices using INTRINSIC motivation. He realizes that the student should suggest the consequences.

RESPONSE

INTRINSIC motivation and having someone else discipline you is an oxymoron, as in cruel kindness. One invalidates the other.

By definition, "INTRINSIC MOTIVATION" infers something you WANT or LIKE to do. Would you WANT to have someone else punish you?

Extensive discussions on motivation occupies large sections of the book at <http://www.DisciplineWithoutStress.com/>.

DWS uses "INTERNAL"--rather than "INTRINSIC"--motivation (although technically all motivation is internal) because taking responsibility and being considerate of others is not something that is "natural." These are characteristics that are taught. Saying, "Thank you" and "Please" are not inborn communications civilities.

I have already alluded to how counterproductive talking about discipline is in the "Welcome" section. I also suggest

the following for your school's consideration.

Although consistency is important, IMPOSING THE SAME CONSEQUENCE ON ALL STUDENTS IS THE LEAST FAIR APPROACH. When a consequence is imposed--be it called logical or natural--students are deprived of ownership in the decision. A more effective and fairer approach is to ELICIT A CONSEQUENCE OR A PROCEDURE THAT WILL HELP STUDENTS REDIRECT IMPULSES TO BECOME MORE RESPONSIBLE. See <http://www.marvinmarshall.com/impulsemanagement.html>.

Being consistent is easily accomplished by asking students if they would rather be treated as a group or as individuals. They will have a preference to be treated as individuals and have ownership in the decision that will HELP them--rather than hurt them. This approach satisfies the consistency requirement AND is in each person's best interest.

The same approach also works with parents if they insist on knowing consequences AHEAD OF TIME. Parents do not realize that IMPOSING PUNISHMENTS IS BASED ON THE ANTIQUATED IDEA THAT A PERSON HAS TO BE HURT--TO BE HARMED--IN ORDER TO LEARN. It is the responsibility of the teacher, who is the professional, to teach the parents in such cases. This is easy to do. Simply ask the same question to the parent that was asked of students.

Try it. You will like it.

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3. INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS

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The brain and body are an integrated system. You cannot separate one from the other. Feelings and cognition are interrelated and have a significant effect upon learning and performance. If you are a parent, you know this. When your child returned home after the first day of school, you may have asked, "How was school?" You also may have asked, "What did you learn?" And you most certainly asked, "Do you like your teacher?" If the child has negative feelings about the teacher, the entire year can become a negative experience.

An understanding of this brain-body connection is essential for reducing stress and influencing others. THOUGHTS HAVE DIRECT AND POWERFUL CONNECTIONS TO ALL SORTS OF PHYSIOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS. Think hard enough about jumping out of an airplane, and your heart will start to race and your palms to sweat.

We know from our personal experiences and through research on the workings of the brain that HOW WE FEEL has a significant effect upon WHAT and HOW we THINK and BEHAVE. Therefore, establishing positive relationships between teachers and students while prompting positive students'

perceptions about their teachers is one of the most fundamental steps to improve learning.

As so many have told me, just implementing the first practice of talking to young people so that they perceive communications in a POSITIVE--rather than in a negative or coercive way--has significantly improved relationships, reduced stress, and increased students' efforts in their learning.

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4. IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS
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Most successful conversations are interactive. Both parties participate. Otherwise, the activity would not really be a conversation. It would be a monologue.

However, there are times when the speaker would really like to finish a thought before the speaking role defers to the other person. Since humor is one of the most effective techniques to relieve tension and get a point across, I share with you a line I used while speaking to my wife and daughter. It brought them laughter and allowed me to finish.

After being interrupted, I simply said, "Excuse me for speaking while you're interrupting."

Feel free to make it your own.

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5. PROMOTING LEARNING
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Spence Rogers and the Peak Learning Systems Team suggest a number of ideas upon which to reflect. The following are among them.

- Hang decorative and inspirational posters.
- Plan how you will greet students as they enter the room.
- Bring plants into the classroom.
- Set up a water station or a means for students to get drinks whenever they are thirsty.
- Set up a music system for CD's or MP3's with a remote.
- Select and prepare music that will create your desired atmosphere.
- Have upbeat music playing as they enter.
- Check for clear visibility of all visuals from everywhere. Sit in each student's seat and put your eyes at the typical student eye level.
- Dress professionally.
- Plan for a beginning that engages students within the first 90 seconds after class begins.
- Begin convincing all students that each one of them will be successful in your class.

More from Peak Learning Systems are available at
<http://www.peaklearn.com>.

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6. DISCIPLINE WITHOUT STRESS (DWS)

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The following is from a post by Kerry at the DWS mailing:
DisciplineWithoutStress@yahoogroups.com

When students are following procedures, they are at an acceptable level of operation, Level C. YOU DON'T NEED RULES. Procedures and expectations accomplish what rules are supposed to do. And they do it better because specific procedures spell out clearly and exactly what you want students to do.

Level D is always available as a choice. You might refer to that option a lot, but always word it as an OPTION--which is the secret to making it even more attractive.

With VERY YOUNG STUDENTS, aim at getting them to understand the difference in a very simple concrete way connected to the classroom (as opposed to examples from life in general). Describe Level C as the level where you do the right thing or you do what's expected by the teacher BECAUSE the teacher is asking you to do it. BECAUSE the teacher is there, students will do what is asked. They will pick up the garbage when they are asked. They will walk nicely in the hall when the teacher is supervising them. They will clean up a mess they have made when they know the teacher is watching. At first, they need something or someone OUTSIDE of themselves to induce them to act correctly. This is okay, but it's not the highest level.

Level D is the highest level. It's higher than Level C because students do the right thing because they WANT to.

Level D LOOKS JUST LIKE Level C if someone is observing the situation. At Level C a person walks nicely in the hallway and at Level D a person walks nicely in the hallway.

The difference is on the INSIDE of the person. The difference is that at Level D a person doesn't need anyone or any thing outside of the person to do what is expected. At Level D students CHOOSE to walk nicely in the hallway because they know it's the expected and responsible thing to do. They don't want to hurt anyone accidentally so they walk. Whether an adult is present or not, they choose to walk; they choose to do the appropriate thing. (They know what the appropriate thing is because you've clearly outlined these things as your procedures.)

Only the person can know if the MOTIVATION is at Level D or

at Level C. How does the person know? The person FEELS it! Level C doesn't FEEL all that special inside. It's just an ordinary feeling inside.

Level D FEELS WONDERFUL, satisfying. You feel proud of yourself. You feel capable. You feel a warmth in your heart.

This feeling is telling you that you're doing the right thing because you WANT to--rather than because you HAVE to. You are feeling powerful because you are managing all by yourself, and you are doing the right thing BY YOUR OWN CHOICE.

The hierarchy can be viewed at <http://www.marvinmarshall.com/hierarchy.htm>

Kerry's has analyzed posts from the mailing and categorized them at <http://disciplineanswers.com/>

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7. TESTIMONIALS/RESEARCH
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I recently spoke with a teacher who had attended one of your trainings a year or two back, and according to him, your techniques had revolutionized his classroom. This is especially significant since this teacher had previously relied primarily on drill sergeant-like coercion to maintain his classroom environment.

This was the second such conversation I have had regarding your trainings with this teacher. It was interesting to me that he was just as enthusiastic about what he had learned during our most recent conversation as he was when we had first talked about it about a year earlier. I've known this teacher for a long time, so I know how he teaches. He doesn't take to new ideas or techniques very easily, so when he endorsed your trainings, I paid attention.

--Terry Jones, Coordinator of Professional Development
Antelope Valley Union High School District,
Antelope Valley, California

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Resources and Support
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FREE, COMPREHENSIVE, and DOWNLOADABLE INFORMATION about DISCIPLINE WITHOUT STRESS is available at <http://www.MarvinMarshall.com>.

DISCIPLINE support links and their descriptions are available at <http://www.marvinmarshall.com/support.html>.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT support links and their descriptions are available at http://www.marvinmarshall.com/classroom_management.html.

Schools with low economic students can receive free books and free staff development by applying at <http://www.disciplinewithoutstress.org>.

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About Dr. Marvin Marshall
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Read about the author and his presentations at <http://www.marvinmarshall.com/about.htm>.
Click on the red link to read about him on one page.

He is available to present keynotes and workshops.
mailto:Marv@MarvinMarshall.com.

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About this Newsletter
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