The No-Fault Classroom

Tools to Resolve Conflict & Foster Relationship Intelligence

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Section I

Prepare the Ground & Lay the Foundation

We hope you, and your students, will enjoy planning and constructing your No-Fault Classroom throughout the school year. Your joint explorations and the structure you create together have the potential to support a learning environment that works for everyone. The time you take at the beginning to prepare the ground for the foundation of your structure will be time well spent.

To prepare the ground and lay a firm foundation for your No-Fault Classroom, we strongly encourage you to take time, before starting the modules, to do the following:

❑ Examine your current beliefs about conflict.

❑ Look at your classroom management style and its underlying assumptions about how you use power.

❑ Create your Vision for your classroom.

❑ Share your Vision with your students and hear their Visions.

❑ Co-create Classroom Group Agreements with your students.

> Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by fear of punishment, and the other by acts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment.
>
> —Mahatma Gandhi

Prepare the Ground for Your No-Fault Classroom

To begin, we invite you to examine some of your present thinking about power, conflict and classroom management to see what assumptions and understandings you are taking into this exploration with your students.

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Reflection on Conflict

Please use the guidelines below during some relaxed time to think about what conflict means to you; the causes of conflict and its effects on learning; and your current thoughts about how to prevent, reduce and resolve conflict.

After you reflect on these questions, we will share with you our own responses to the same questions.

Teacher Exploration:

Your Understanding of Conflict, Its Causes, Its Effects &
What Prevents, Reduces and Resolves It

What is conflict?

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Punishment damages goodwill and self-esteem, and shifts our attention from the intrinsic value of an action to external consequences.

—Marshall B. Rosenberg

What are the causes of conflict?

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How does conflict affect classroom learning?

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What prevents, reduces and resolves conflict?

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Our Understanding of Conflict, Its Causes, Its Effects & What Prevents, Reduces and Resolves It

What is conflict?

We begin with Webster's dictionary definition of *conflict*: "competitive or opposing action resulting from [a perception of] opposing needs, drives or wishes."

The *con-* in conflict is equivalent to *com-*, which means together; the root, *fligare*, means "to strike." In short, conflict is "striking together," as in a fight, battle or war.

Simple situations can be either relatively minor problems to be solved or the start of a fight. Trish hits Alfredo. Yukiko grabs Ryan's pencil and won't give

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it back. Jenny didn't turn in her homework for the third time this week. What determines, in each of these cases, whether an argument or fight will ensue?

From a behavioral point of view, if any of the players in the above interchanges uses criticism, blame or name-calling, the scales tip in favor of conflict. Each exchange of blaming actions and words contributes to flaring tempers and moves Trish and Alfredo, Yukiko and Ryan, and Jenny and the teacher closer to the battle zone.

In conflict situations, name-calling, hitting, criticism and blame are often all that teachers and administrators see and hear before assigning blame themselves and handing out punishments. Conflict, however, is a more complex dynamic with much deeper roots. Those who are willing to ask why students call each other names, hit each other, and criticize and blame one another can discover the true nature of conflict and be primed to find new, creative ways to get to the roots of it and work with it rather than manage or suppress it.

What are the causes of conflict?

Again, taking off from Webster's definition: *conflict* is "competitive or opposing action resulting from [the perception of] opposing needs, drives or wishes."

If we're in a situation where we think that our needs, drives or wishes won't be considered or can't be met, we perceive danger and feel afraid. This is an automatic response. We're not in control of it. Our whole physiology shifts to protecting ourselves. Stress hormones are released that shut down the reasoning zones of the brain. Simplified, binary, either/or, black-and-white thinking takes over: I'm right, you're wrong. You're to blame. In short order, "you" become "the enemy."

Fight, Flight, Freeze

When we are in danger, perceived or actual, we respond automatically with a fight, flight or freeze reaction: we lash out (hit, scream, blame others) OR try to escape the situation (lie, blame ourselves, run away), OR freeze in our tracks (cower, cry, shake). Any of these reactions is likely to set off a chain reaction of judgmental, punitive responses from those around us, who are often equally stressed. The situation escalates and the understanding and reasoned response that can lead to resolution is deferred.

When conflict is dealt with in our habitual ways—by finding out who is to blame and punishing that person—fear and resentment are left smoldering, and conflict will soon flare up again.

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As we see it, the root of this conflict, and all conflict, is *the thought or perception that my needs aren't going to get met in this situation*. The fear generated by this thought triggers a protective, defensive reaction that sets the conflict in motion and keeps it fueled.

How does conflict affect classroom learning?

Emotional safety is a fundamental requirement for learning. Under the emotional stress of conflict, the learning zones of the brain shut down. It is not possible, in the midst of a stressful, fearful thought, to focus one's attention on tasks that require reason, concentration, creativity or timetables for completion.

What prevents, reduces and resolves conflict?

To prevent, reduce and resolve conflict, we need to create learning communities where all students and teachers are assured that their needs matter and can be met. If we are certain that our needs do matter and that there will be an attempt to understand and address them, we are not likely to perceive danger and go into a fear response. We will have no reason to take a protective or defensive stance.

As well as assurance that everyone's needs matter equally, each member of the learning community will need a thorough knowledge of their inner landscape—thoughts, feelings, needs and choices—so they can sort through complex emotions, recognize their needs, express them clearly, strategize ways to meet them and help others do the same. In learning communities like this, problem solving is more common than conflict. And conflict can be addressed and worked through with everyone's needs in mind.

> We see things the way our minds have instructed our eyes to see.
>
> —Muhammad Yunus, founder of Grameen Bank and 2006 Nobel Peace Prize winner

Reflection on Classroom Management Style

Part of preparing the ground to construct a No-Fault Classroom is taking stock of your current reality—your policies and practices for conducting your classroom. We offer here some of the classroom management styles we have seen used by teachers.

The *authoritarian management style* values rules, respect for authority and obedience. The behaviors of those who don't comply with these expectations are suppressed with threats, incentives, rewards, consequences and punishment. Administrators and teachers determine positive and negative re-enforcers. Commands and demands are common. Students learn to obey because they fear what will happen if they don't. Students' needs are not recognized. Results: Lack of respect, resistance, withdrawal, rebelliousness and conflict are daily occurrences in these classrooms.

The *permissive management style*, which often appears in reaction to author-itarian structures and policies, prioritizes meeting student needs for free expression and choice. Teachers often understate their own needs when using a permissive management style. Eventually, when students are "out of control" and teachers are exhausted, the pendulum swings back and teachers resort to an authoritarian management style to restore order and balance. Results: This style creates an oscillating management structure that often results in confusion (for both teacher and students), resistance, lack of respect and dependency.

The *authoritative management style* provides students some choices within a clear and firm structure. Teachers guide and facilitate learning. Teachers show students the path to achieve outcomes, and students learn that they have control over some outcomes. The authoritative style values consistency, a high level of performance, firm adult expectations, consistent and firm adult-created policies and consequences, and opportunities offered to students to learn independence. Administrators and teachers remain in primary control of expectations and rules, incentives and consequences. Some needs of students are addressed and some are not. Results: A softer tone is achieved than with the authoritative style, though behavior is still managed through external "incentives" and "consequences." Students who meet expected performance standards thrive.

A *relationship-based management style* values the needs of students and teachers in the classroom equally and tries to find ways to understand and address them. Mutual decision making and mutual objective setting are learned and practiced. A relationship-based process for dialogue is taught and

> **Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding.**
>
> —Albert Einstein

Classroom Management Styles:

Authoritarian	Permissive	Authoritative	Relationship-based
Values rules, respect for authority, obedience	Values students' needs for free expression & choice	Values high performance, consistency, structure, student choice	Values teacher's & students' needs equally
Teacher makes rules	Students make rules	Teacher makes rules	Mutual objective setting
Teacher makes decisions	Students make decisions	Teacher makes decisions	Mutual decision making
Commands & demands Punitive use of force	Dialogue & demands Oscillates between punitive and protective use of force	Dialogue & expectations Mild punitive enforcement	Relationship-based dialogue Protective use of force only
Fosters fear of imposed punitive discipline	Offers freedom with little or no discipline	Supports looking outside oneself for discipline	Fosters self-confidence and self-discipline

used to engage co-operation. Students want to co-operate because they see that their contributions are valued. Force is employed only to protect what members of the learning community value. There is no judgment, blame or punishment for those whose behavior is not supporting the agreed-upon values; instead, there is an intent to identify and address the needs behind the behavior. Results: Mutual respect, caring, genuine co-operation and the ability to focus on learning tasks.

The *No-Fault Classroom* curriculum guides teachers in gradually developing a more and more relationship-based management style in their classroom.

Two Ways to Use Power in the Classroom

Underlying each of the management styles is one of two ways to use power: *power over* others, most fully represented by the authoritarian management style; and *power with* others, most fully represented by the relationship-based management style.

Teachers' moment-by-moment interactions with students are based on either exercising power over them or power with them. Check the following *power over* expressions and *power with* expressions that you most frequently hear yourself using.

Power Over Expressions

❏ *You must do this right now! If you don't…*

❏ *Don't make me ask you again!*

❏ *You are expected to do what you're told.*

❏ *I know that this isn't interesting or important to you, but you have to _____.*

❏ *How many times must I repeat myself?*

❏ *If you talk disrespectfully to me you will be sent to the office.*

Do you find yourself:

❏ lecturing?

❏ advising?

❏ arguing?

❏ analyzing?

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Do you hear yourself:

❑ making commands?

❑ making demands?

Do you hear yourself using these or similar phrases:

❑ *you have to*

❑ *you must*

❑ *you ought to*

❑ *you should*

Power With Expressions

❑ *I'd like to find a solution that works for everyone.*

❑ *I'm happy when we work together.*

❑ *I'd like to hear how this sounds to you.*

❑ *I wonder what you need right now.*

❑ *Would you be willing to _____?*

❑ *Please help me understand what you have in mind.*

❑ *I wonder what comes up for you hearing what I said?*

❑ *I'd like to tell you what isn't working for me about this situation.*

❑ *I'd like to tell you what is working for me about this situation.*

In conflict situations, as in all other situations, the primary message of a teacher with a relationship-based style of management is this:

❑ *I want us to come up with strategies and solutions that work for all of us.*

❑ *I'm willing to explore with you ways to do that.*

Teachers determined to exercise *power with* their students are not afraid to listen to what students have to say. In fact, they welcome it. Listening doesn't mean agreeing or disagreeing. Listening is often the beginning of a dialogue that has the potential to get to the real root of problems and conflicts.

There are three ways of dealing with difference: domination, compromise and integration. By domination only one side gets what it wants; by compromise neither side gets what it wants; by integration we find a way by which both sides may get what they wish.

—Mary Parker Follett

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Whether you are building on a *power over* or a *power with* foundation, your students will be learning how to address problems and conflicts from everything you say and do. They will pick up your tactics and use them with their classmates and friends. They will take your tactics home with them as a foundation for interactions with siblings, and they will use them to build a foundation for future relationships.

Power With = True Co-operation

We hear how much teachers want co-operation in their classrooms; in many cases, how desperate they are for it. However, teachers whose classrooms are based on *power over* practices often don't perceive co-operation to be the two-way working relationship with students that the word implies. They see it as a one-way street in which students do what teachers want them to do. When students don't do what is expected, they are called "uncooperative," written up for bad behavior, sent to the principal's office to suffer consequences—or given rewards or incentives to do things the teacher's way.

The *co-* in *co*-operation means "together," and the *oper-* means "work," so *co-operation* means "working together." True co-operation is not something that can be mandated. Where there is no *togetherness* in the operation of a classroom—in mutual decision making, objective setting and problem solving—the following natural consequences can be expected: fear, resistance, arguments, hurt feelings, battles of will and other forms of conflict in addition to a reliance on punishment and rewards.

A fundamental law of human relations is this: Teachers who leave the *co-* out of classroom operations are destined to reap the consequences of the omission. No *co-* in classroom operations predicts a cycle in which conflict is followed by punishments and incentives to resolve the conflict, which leads to further conflict and further punishments and incentives, and on and on. If you aren't willing to work with your students, they aren't going to be willing to work with you.

Conversely, when you are willing to work with your students, you will find they enjoy working with you. According to leading scientists, co-operation is in our genes, since it is necessary for ongoing survival of a species. Humans have a feel-good response when co-operating with one another toward a shared objective or vision. And so, we do not have to teach young people co-operation—only inspire it by co-operating with them and giving them many opportunities to enjoy co-operative endeavors that have meaning and purpose for them. This is a definition we enjoy for *co-operation*: "A way to engage power with others so everyone has power to thrive."

What Is Your Vision for Your Classroom?

It is extremely helpful to have a Vision of your own to further strengthen the foundation you are establishing for your No-Fault Classroom. When you have a well-defined Vision, you are able to sense and articulate your purpose for teaching. With that clarity, you will be able to choose the methods and materials that will serve your Vision best.

Some things to consider: Do you want a classroom where students always get their work done your way and on your time schedule? Do you want a classroom where children follow rules—your rules? Think it through. If you say this is the kind of classroom you want, realize that you are likely choosing to spend a lot of your time looking for misbehavior, writing it up, reporting it to parents, sending students out of the room for it, collecting names of the unruly on the board, putting check marks next to them for each additional unacceptable behavior, and trying to determine appropriate rewards and punishments. Another major portion of your time will be spent trying to manage the students who complain, nag, bully, tattle and resist your efforts.

If your focus is on connecting with students, making relationships with them and finding out the good reasons they have for doing what they do, you are likely to spend very little of your time carrying out the above routines and a lot of your time in productive living and learning together.

Parker Palmer, author of *The Courage to Teach*, asked students from all around the country to describe a good teacher. He says that all of them described good teachers as people who have some sort of connective capacity, who connect themselves to their students, their students to one another, and everyone to the subject being studied. "The connections made by good teachers are held not in their methods but in their hearts . . . the place where intellect and emotion and spirit and will converge."[1]

Your Vision will be your pole star. Develop it carefully and align with it as many methods and practices as possible.

Here are two brief Classroom Vision statements written by teachers:

My Vision is a classroom where everyone's needs matter, where everyone enjoys learning and where we learn together to resolve conflicts peacefully.

My Vision is a learning environment where students feel physically and emotion-ally safe—a place where students know they belong, where their needs matter, their gifts, talents and ideas are received and celebrated, and they thrive as learners.

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1. Palmer, *The Courage to Teach*, 11.

Be bold: set a Vision for the classroom you really want. What is the space like? The learning? What are the interactions like between you and your students? What are the interactions like between and among students?

My Vision is:

_____

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_____

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_____

Lay The Foundation for Your No-Fault Classroom

When you have taken some time for reflection and are ready to lay the foundation for your No-Fault Classroom, we recommend you start with the two Class Meetings described below, before beginning the Introduction to the No-Fault Zone and the modules of the *No-Fault Classroom* curriculum.

Class Meeting 1: Generate a Classroom Vision

When you take the time to form an understanding and agreement *with* your students about what kind of classroom you want to create, they receive the message, loud and clear, that their needs matter and that you value their thoughts. They will see and feel themselves to be active, integral contributors to their classroom rather than passive receivers of instructions, commands and demands. This is a powerful message that encourages students to take interest and participate in their learning community.

In Class Meeting 1, you will introduce to your students the value you see in creating a Vision and ask students for their ideas of how a Vision can serve them. Here are the values we see: a shared Vision clarifies what you want for yourself and for others, and it helps you direct your actions toward what you

> Power is created not when some people coerce others but when they willingly take action together in support of a common purpose. Power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert.
>
> —Hannah Arendt

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want. You will be creating your classroom together throughout the year, so sharing information about what you want and need is vital information at the beginning and throughout the year.

Generating a Classroom Vision can take a while, so please make time for it. Class Meeting 1 can also be planned to span a few sessions over the first week or two of school. We consider it an essential activity for constructing a No-Fault Classroom and hope you prioritize sufficient time for you and your class to meet.

Objective: To share your Vision and ask students to share their Visions for a classroom you would enjoy spending time in every day; to establish a community where everyone's Vision is included; to establish an intention for the classroom to be a place where everyone belongs; to focus minds on what you want to create during the school year; to listen to your students

Materials: Notes from Vision exercise, drawing paper, colored pencils and markers

We are disturbed not by what happens to us, but by our thoughts about what happens.

—Epictetus

Procedure:

1. Using your notes from the Vision exercise in Section I: Lay the Foundation for Your No-Fault Classroom, share your Vision with your students. Ask if they have questions about what you shared.

2. Lead students in a thought exercise to clarify their Vision for the classroom. You can ask them to close their eyes and picture what a welcoming learning community would look like: *What would you find in it? What could happen there? How would you feel when you walk in each morning?*

3. After finishing the visualization, hand out drawing paper to each student and ask them to record information about their Vision for the classroom. They can write their Vision down, make a list of attributes, draw a picture of it, write a poem, make a collage and so forth.

4. When finished, ask if any students will volunteer to show and share their Vision for the classroom.

5. Collect all Visions and make a collage, "quilt" or mandala with them, displaying them on the wall.

6. Take a photograph of the collage to place with your classroom Group Agreements (see Class Meeting 2) and for reference when the collage is taken down. (Please keep a copy of your original Classroom Vision collage pieces. You will refer to this Vision throughout the curriculum, including in some of the last few modules.)

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Class Meeting 2: Facilitate Group Agreements

Often, in traditional classrooms, "group agreements" and rules are made arbitrarily and casually, if not unilaterally. Students say yes to rules they don't genuinely participate in making, nor think much about, then later receive punishment when they "break the rule."

In a relationship-based, No-Fault Classroom, Group Agreements are made to serve your Classroom Vision. When all members of the class come to a mutual understanding of what makes a safe learning environment, you have provided another experience that tells them that their needs matter and that they have a voice in how things run. Participating in making their own safety "rules" encourages students to express their needs, take responsibility for their behavior, take learning risks (make mistakes) and co-operate to create a community where everyone belongs and enjoys learning together.

Objective: To create an environment where students participate eagerly in learning tasks; to meet needs for physical and emotional safety and respect; to make agreements that everyone participates in and is willing to try; to acknowledge that all agreements are experiments in living and can be reviewed and revised if they are not working well; to reach genuine agreement that everyone assumes responsibility for them

Materials: Large chart paper prepared with large version of diagram below on it, copy of physical and emotional safety facts (below) for reference during discussion, markers, extra blank chart paper for lists of suggestions

Procedure:

1. Express to your students your desire to make your classroom safe for everyone. Share the science behind this recognition: that physical and emotional safety is essential for learning to take place. Share information from the scientific facts (below) in a way that your students will understand.

2. Post the chart paper with the diagram below reproduced on it somewhere where everyone can see it.

3. Lead a discussion about the need for physical safety. Ask students: *What actions are not physically safe in the classroom?* Write their answers, or ask a student to volunteer to write answers, on the chart on the left side and outside of the circle.

4. Turn the discussion to the need for emotional safety. Ask students: *What actions do not contribute to emotional safety?* Write their answers,

or ask a student to volunteer to write answers, on the chart on the right side and outside the circle.

5. By now some students will likely be wondering what the big empty circle on the chart is for. This is where you will make Group Agreements to meet needs for safety, trust and respect. Share your purpose for making Group Agreements together at the start of the year, and wanting to review them throughout the year. Here are some values we see in Group Agreements: establishing shared participation and responsibility; confirming clarity about the shared Vision for the classroom; establishing guidelines for safety, trust and respect that will allow optimal learning to take place.

6. Ask students to suggest actions they would like the group to consider for the Group Agreements. Help them get to specific doable requests, as much as possible. If someone says, *I want people to respect me*, you can ask: *What would you like people to agree to do that would meet your need for respect?* See also the list of sample Group Agreements below for examples of doable requests. It is difficult to "do" something abstract such as "always be respectful."

7. Make a list of suggestions on a blank piece of chart paper. Then go through each one and ask if anyone has questions about it. If not, ask if anyone is *not* willing to agree to that request. (This question is more likely to bring out any objections than if you ask, *Does everyone agree to this request?* With the positively-phrased question you are likely to get some unthinking compliance, since that is what many students are used to.) It is in the interest of the class to encourage questions and draw out any objections during this meeting or you will deal with them later on, most likely in the form of resistance or resentment.

8. Write all Group Agreements approved by the whole class in the circle in the center of the original chart.

9. Post your Group Agreements where everyone can see them. The Classroom Group Agreements are there to serve your Classroom Vision and meet people's needs for safety, trust, belonging, learning and more. Tell your students that the class will review them throughout the year. New agreements can be added, and old ones that don't work can be removed. Seeing the Group Agreements as life-enriching requests instead of set-in-stone demands makes it much more likely that you and your students will honor them. (Remember to keep a copy of your original Classroom Vision and Group Agreements on hand. You will refer to them throughout the curriculum, including in some of the last few modules.)

Facts about physical and emotional safety and learning

Physical and Emotional Safety is the number one requirement for learning to take place. Our brains are finely tuned to keep us safe at all times. There are three primary divisions of the brain—the primitive/old brain, the limbic brain and the reasoning/learning zones. When we sense danger, whether it is physical or emotional, real or imagined, fear is triggered. Fear has a dramatic effect on the body and the brain. To meet needs for protection and safety, stress hormones are automatically secreted throughout the body. In the face of perceived danger, quick action is more important than careful thinking and analysis. The reasoning and learning zones of the brain shut down. Energy goes to the survival zone of the brain at the base of the skull and to the arms and legs so we can protect ourselves by fighting or running away. In *Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman, this automatic process is referred to as an "emotional hijacking."

Understand the enemy and you can defeat him, understand yourself and there is no enemy.

—Ancient Chinese Proverb

Physical and emotional safety diagram for Class Meeting 2

Physical Safety   Emotional Safety
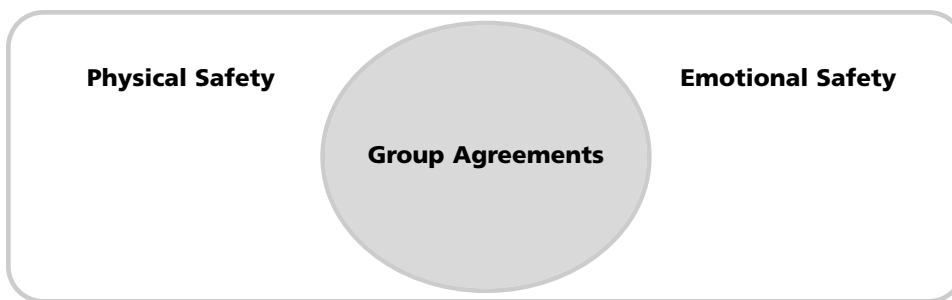
Group Agreements

Sample Group Agreements

❑ Listen when others are talking.

❑ Use words to solve problems rather than kicking, hitting or harming others.

❑ Pick up after yourself.

❑ Don't laugh or tease when people make mistakes.

❑ No put-downs.

❑ Speak up when you'd like to see changes.

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When Students Break an Agreement

The high price of punishment

In traditional settings where rules are made by teachers, when a student breaks a rule, the teacher typically gives a warning, makes a threat or determines a punishment which is meant to instill fear and obedience. The result of these strategies for compliance is a class full of students who feel guilty and ashamed or resentful and angry. With these feelings stirring, it becomes unlikely that students will wholeheartedly attend to learning of any kind. The feelings inspired by such policies and practices show up in the classroom as resistance, or half-hearted compliance.

Another result of seeing punitive practices such as warnings, threats and punishments modeled by adults is that students learn to use the same strategies with each other, in the classroom and on the playground. Students who use threats and punishment to get other kids to do what they want are called "bullies." Anti-bullying programs now abound to change this behavior; they often administer bigger doses of guilt, shame and punishment in hopes that the delinquent students will change their ways. Surprisingly few people ask the question, *Where do these students learn bullying behavior?* Fewer still see any correlation between disciplinary policies and bullying. And, tragically, disciplinary policies rarely get to the root of the problem. These policies neither help students identify the needs they want to meet nor do they help them find truly effective ways to meet them.

An alternative to punishment

When students participate in making Group Agreements for the classroom, in order to meet their needs for safety, trust, respect and learning, they tend to take responsibility from the start for the Agreements and for their own behavior. Group Agreements assure students that their needs are taken seriously, their word is trusted, and their thoughts and concerns are valued. When every student has agreed to the proposed Agreements, you can move forward with assurance that if agreements are broken there will be a good reason that can be discussed, rather than thinking that students who break Agreements are disrespectful, rebellious or "bad."

If you want to teach people a new way of thinking, don't bother trying to teach them. Instead, give them a tool, the use of which will lead to new ways of thinking.

—Buckminster Fuller

Identify Needs & Strategies for Meeting Them

Here is a routine we suggest for times when students break classroom Agreements.

1. Student breaks an agreement.

2. If someone is in danger, use protective force or restraint, if necessary.

3. Provide time if necessary for an Energy Shifter (see Appendix 3) so the student can cool down before talking more.

4. Give empathy for the student's feelings and needs.

5. When the student knows what his or her needs are in the situation, they will be able to see other, more effective, ways to handle those needs. They will also be able to imagine what they could do differently in the future for better results.

Example 1

Teacher: Rylan, I see how difficult it is for you to follow through on your agreement to listen while others are talking, and some of the other students and I would like to hear what is preventing you from doing what you agreed.

Rylan: I just get so frustrated sitting and listening all the time. I need to be able to do something, so I just start talking to Lisa.

Teacher: So, you are saying that you feel pent up and frustrated when you are listening for long periods of time, is that right?

Rylan: Yeah!

Teacher: And you need something to do?

Rylan: Yeah!

Teacher: I have an idea. Do you think it would help you to listen while others are talking if you were able to quietly doodle on paper or squeeze a ball?

Rylan: Maybe.

Teacher: Would you be willing to try that for a few days and let me know how that works?

Rylan: Okay.

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Example 2

[Teacher restrains Angela from hitting Jon.]

Teacher: Angela, I can't let you hit Jon. I am stopping you because we agreed to make this a safe place for everyone, and I will stop anyone who tries to hit another student. It looks like you are really upset, and I wonder what you need right now.

Angela: I need him to stop calling me names.

Teacher: Are you feeling upset because you need consideration and respect?

Angela: Yeah! And he's not following the rule we made not to call people names.

Teacher: Hmm? Are you saying that you need to be able to trust people to follow through on what they say they will do?

Angela: Yeah! If Jon doesn't have to follow the rules, I don't have to either.

Teacher: Are you saying that if there are rules you want everyone to follow them?

Angela: Yes!

Teacher: Would you be willing to talk with Jon about this?

Angela: No. He won't listen to me.

Teacher: If I stay with you for support?

Angela: I'll try it, but I'm not so sure it will work.

Teacher: I appreciate your willingness to try. Shall we find Jon and make an appointment to talk with him?

You may think that this approach will take time away from learning. However, it takes much less time than punitive practices do, and students will see you modeling problem-solving strategies that they will gradually learn and use themselves.

> **Although attempting to bring about world peace through the internal transformation of individuals is difficult, it is the only way.**
>
> —His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Supporting Activities

- Provide two shoe boxes for the classroom. Label one "**What's Working**," and the other, "**What Isn't Working**." Students can decorate them if they like. Encourage students to express themselves by writing their appreciations and complaints about what is going on in the classroom and putting them in the appropriate boxes. Agree upon a time and format for reading them. Celebrate appreciations and problem-solve complaints.

- Provide a stack of Notes of Appreciation (template in Appendix 2). Use them to write notes to students about how their actions contribute to your life and/or to life in the classroom. Encourage students to write notes to each other to express how individual and group actions affect them.