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# Classroom Discipline: “THAT Should Teach Them!”

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by Al Bandstra

“When I came to borrow the stapler from your desk today, I couldn’t help but notice several students talking with each other in the back row. Were you aware that that was going on?” Amy is talking with Kyle, a first-year teacher whom she was asked to mentor.

“Yeah, I guess I remember it now. I should probably talk to them about it again.”

“Kyle, we’re six weeks into the school year. Do you think talking is going to do any good? You need to teach the kids to respect you; hand out some consequences next time.”

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Al Bandstra teaches sixth grade at Sioux Center Christian School. His book, *Beyond Control: Heart-Centered Classroom Climate and Discipline*, offers encouragement and advice to teachers who struggle with difficult students. It challenges the long-standing dominance of behaviorism and presents a practical, Christian alternative.

Amy’s mention of discipline makes Kyle uncomfortable. Admittedly, the children have needed more reminders to pay attention lately, but he feels that their behavior is still tolerable. And speaking of respect, Kyle is not convinced that punishment is the way to get it. Students may listen to Amy, but they don’t have much respect for her. Some of them refer to her as a crab when they stop to chat with Kyle during break time.

“It’s just that the kids and I have really bonded these last few weeks. I don’t want to spoil that.”

“Taking advantage of you is what they’re doing,” Amy warns. “If you don’t show them who’s in charge, you’re going to regret it.”

## Two Sides, One Coin

Amy and Kyle epitomize two classroom discipline styles that seem at odds with each other: one wants to cut some slack, and the other insists that children toe the line. Both positions claim valid goals, yet each also misses the mark. Misbehaving students need accountability, as Amy knows, but a reactive style often leads to resentment—and more behavior problems. Conversely, a positive rapport may foster cooperation that is more genuine, but without boundaries that harmony is unsustainable.

As different as the two standpoints appear, it is interesting to note that each slant operates with the same basic understanding of what discipline is: *both the teachers who shy away from discipline—and those who brandish it like a club—see discipline as a conflict*. Conflicts presume winners and losers, struggle and overpowerment. Amy, who wants control, employs discipline as a means of prevailing over troublemakers, whom she views as threats to

her authority. Kyle, who values relationships, *avoids discipline* for fear that students would see him as their adversary.

Regardless of whether teachers identify more with Kyle or with Amy, a conflict view of discipline limits one's ability to provide the guidance children need. It's time to leave the conflict perspective behind and look for a new way to view classroom discipline. Any viable alternative would find its basis in Scripture and would prove workable in the classroom.

I propose a *teaching model* for classroom discipline as an alternative to the *conflict* model. This article will provide an overview of such a teaching model and examine its Scriptural foundations. It will also explore various ways to apply the model in classroom practice and address certain questions that arise when the teaching model for discipline is presented.

### **Overview of the Teaching Model for Classroom Discipline**

In short, the teaching model for discipline is a perspective shift that reframes behavior problems as learning problems. Instead of interpreting misbehavior as insubordination, teachers choose to view it as a learning need. Discipline situations, then, become opportunities for guiding wayward students in the concepts and skills of interacting in a learning community. By opting to view behavior struggles as learning difficulties, teachers can more easily override the impulses to react or to shy away from misbehaving children, and as a result, provide correction that redirects students without alienating them.

At first glance, one might presume that a teaching model would involve merely talking with students about their behavior instead of holding them accountable. Even though that deduction is understandable, it is incorrect. Just as with traditional classroom discipline, teachers may still make use of rules and consequences (teacher-generated or developed collaboratively with students). Two elements about classroom-discipline plans change, though, with the teaching model. First, because not every discipline issue can be solved with rules and consequences, people who use this model expand their options to include responses that may lie outside

traditional discipline plans. Rules and consequences, therefore, are one tool of many that teachers use in responding to misbehavior.

Second, the nature of "penalties" changes as well. Under this teaching model, consequences are used to teach appropriate behavior rather than to extract a payment for wrongdoing. Therefore, when teachers require misbehaving children to face consequences, they assume a teaching demeanor instead of using anger or intimidation. Furthermore, before responding to misdeeds, teachers try to determine why the behavior has occurred. If penalties become necessary, teachers attempt to choose consequences that will help children to learn from their mistakes.

Beyond this perspective on discipline plans, in what other ways does the teaching model affect one's approach to discipline? It often seems that teachers operate in two different modes: one for teaching and another for discipline. While functioning in "teaching mode," they focus on content standards and on finding the best strategies for meeting those standards. If their goals aren't reached, teachers reflect on where the obstacles lie and make adjustments. The investigation may lead them to present information in new ways, provide extra practice, or address personal needs that have created barriers for students. When teachers address behavior, however, they often shift into a different mode, one that focuses on the issues of power that are at stake. Instead of concentrating on the things they want students to learn, they think about how to hold wrongdoers in check; and if students resist correction, teachers consider not how to lead students through the difficulty but how to gain the upper hand. The teaching model, by contrast, allows teachers to remain in "teaching mode" all of the time, whether providing cognitive domain instruction or addressing student behavior.

How does a teaching model handle the question of authority? Those who see themselves primarily as teachers—and not as contenders—are better positioned to retain control in discipline situations because they respond to resistance on their own terms. Instead of reacting to willful students, as those with a conflict perspective do, teaching-mindset people take the lead by exchanging calmness for irritability and returning kindness for trouble. Instead of

needing to prove themselves or protect their egos, teachers focus their “discipline energy” on nudging wayward students in the right direction.

Since most children in school already know how they ought to behave, wouldn’t assigning consequences for misdeeds seem a better use of instructional time? This question arises from the assumption I mentioned earlier, specifically that *teaching* in discipline denotes only lecturing or sermonizing. A moment of reflection on the practices of effective teaching, however, should quickly dispel that notion. People select the strategies that make their content most accessible and meaningful. In certain instances, a lecture is the best method for conveying an idea, but not always: an illustration, a photo, or a short story may multiply the impact of a lesson in a fraction of the time. Similarly, children who need to learn skills benefit more from a teacher’s modeling and from guided practice than they do from hearing a person merely talk about how to solve a problem, perform a layup, or play a major scale. Generally speaking, effective teachers emphasize showing and minimize telling.

Those who operate out of a teaching mindset for discipline also practice the “show; don’t tell” maxim when they address behavior. They model calmness in the way they respond to misdeeds. They demonstrate attentiveness by listening to students and respect by responding to young people who challenge their assumptions. If a bit of extra practice suits the situation, a teacher may ask a student to “try again” at entering the room quietly or at speaking an opinion with tact. Teachers may also use illustrations or short stories to help children make connections between their behavior and its unintended consequences. Finally, if students fail to take the teacher seriously, that teacher may choose to speak more firmly or assign a consequence rather than give repeated warnings or deliver speeches about the difference between right and wrong. Similar to the way they approach lesson planning, teacher-mindset people choose discipline responses that maximize impact without belaboring it.

Regarding efficient use of instructional time,

In short, the teaching model for discipline is a perspective shift that reframes behavior problems as learning problems.

then, a conflict model of discipline is more detrimental than a teaching model because it siphons both time and attention away from content learning. “Avoiders” like Kyle, for instance, allow problems to escalate, whereas “confronters” like Amy distract students from their learning. Those who view discipline as a teaching opportunity, on the other hand, consistently focus on what is to be learned. In the long term, a teaching mindset further enhances curriculum learning because it reduces students’ desire to act out or misbehave, and it decreases the classroom distractions that arise when teachers must switch off their teaching mode and power up their behavior-response mode.

### **Biblical Foundations**

When I propose the idea of replacing the conflict view of discipline with a teaching perspective, one question often arises: “Shouldn’t we let students know that sin is *sin*?” Don’t skirt around the main issue, in other words. Disobedience is wrong; let’s call it what it is.

One problem with this sort of thinking is that classifying particular behaviors as “sinful” discounts the pervasiveness of sin. Selfish motives affect many of our choices, no matter how honorable those actions appear. For example, one student disrupts class while another remains quiet yet passively indifferent. Can we really say that the disruptive child sinned but the other did not? And how do we categorize the behavior of those who follow rules only to gain the teacher’s favor or to earn rewards?

Classifying certain actions as “sinful” also overlooks the reasons that might have spawned the behavior. For instance, conduct that arises from a defiant attitude might be considered “sinful,” but it’s difficult to condemn those whose misbehavior springs up from difficulties at home, troubles with friends, or frustration with learning.

In Scripture, God’s commands for obedience aren’t about merely keeping the rules; his deeper desire is for people to act in love. This theme runs throughout the Bible, but one place where it becomes strikingly clear in this statement in Christ’s

Sermon on the Mount: “For I tell you that unless your righteousness *surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law* (emphasis mine), you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:20 *NIV*). Those who first heard these words must have wondered if Jesus could actually be serious. Pharisees were the ultimate rule-keepers, following not only the Torah but also the *Mishnah*, a complex system of rules that served as a “hedge” around the Torah, just to be sure that none of Moses’ laws were inadvertently broken. Ordinary people stood little chance of outperforming the teachers of the law in their righteousness.

Christ’s meaning becomes clear, though, in subsequent verses. From his perspective, virtue was not attained merely by avoiding murder; people needed to restrain their anger and be reconciled to those with whom they disagreed. Neither did abstinence from adultery equate with purity; folks needed to control their lust. Christ’s hearers were not to give their oppressors what they had coming (“eye for eye and tooth for tooth”); instead, they were called to love their enemies and to pray for their persecutors.

In a similar vein, compliance with classroom rules does not necessarily measure up to participation that arises from a love for learning. Submission to authority is not the same as cooperation that stems from genuine respect, and restraint from hitting or name-calling is not equal to treating one’s neighbors with empathy or compassion. Faithfulness with classroom discipline has to be about more than pointing out the wrong or compelling children to “be good.” Where then *does* the focus lie?

One way of looking at sinfulness is that it takes hold of the love people are called to show toward God and others and redirects that love inward, toward oneself. When teachers avert problems by raising an interest in learning, when they teach students to consider their behavior in terms of how it may affect the people around them, those teachers guide children to think beyond themselves and their own immediate desires. In short, they help learners to turn their love outward again.

Finally, in some situations, it is entirely appropriate to tell children that they have done wrong. What is more important, however, is for misbehaving students to understand *why* their actions were

wrong. Do they believe they are in trouble merely because they disobeyed, for example, or can they see the negative effects of their choices?

To summarize, the Scriptural foundations for a teaching model lie in the goal of cultivating conduct that arises from love and respect. Contrary to what some might presume, this perspective on discipline does not belittle the seriousness of wrongdoing. Instead, it seeks to bring about a change in the attitudes of students as well as a change in their behavior.

### **The Teaching Model in Classroom Practice**

Let’s now investigate the ways a teaching model might apply in various discipline situations. This section will consider the model as a response to the original problem that our two teachers in the opening dialogue discussed, the issue of chatting in class. The next section will go on to explore case studies representing other discipline situations where the teaching model is applied.

As we noted earlier, Amy views the talk as evidence of disregard for authority and suggests gaining the upper hand through assigning consequences. Kyle, who wants to preserve relationships with students, would opt instead for providing the children with more reminders. As we also observed, both view the issue as a conflict: Amy wants to prevail in that struggle, but Kyle prefers to avoid it. Alternatively, the teaching model proposes a third way, a process that addresses the problem *and* safeguards teacher-student relationships. Using three particular qualities of effective teaching, let’s now work through this discipline situation.

#### Forward-Thinking

Similar to the conflict view of discipline, the teaching mindset strives to eliminate disruptive behavior that occurs; yet it perceives the goal in terms of a more positive endeavor. Instead of meeting only when problems occur, for example, Kyle—and Amy as his mentor—should regularly discuss ways to encourage positive participation. What steps are they taking, in other words, to build a community of learners?

In view of that goal, Kyle may need to become more deliberate about engaging students in their learning. Perhaps he could work on his presentation

style or add more variety to his teaching strategies. Encouraging students to voice their questions and interests—and taking those ideas into account in his planning—should also help draw students in. In addition, Kyle could encourage active thinking by interspersing factual questions with ones that are more open-ended: “Can you think of a simpler way to solve this problem?” “Why do you suppose the author made that woman scream?” “What sort of experiment would prove your theory?” “How does the crescendo change this song?” He could further encourage participation by posing questions that call for students to interact with each other instead of with only the teacher: “Hope thinks the poem is about justice, but do you see any other meanings?” “Sam, why do you suppose Bethany said the answer is 21?” “Cole believes that a bigger balloon would work better. Are all of you in agreement with him?” In authentic learning communities—where students take an active role in their learning—listening and participating are more than just teacher expectations; they’re an integral part of the classroom experience.

### Reflective

What would the teaching model suggest if children chat with each other in class, despite the teacher’s efforts to make learning meaningful? Viewing the problem with a teaching mindset, Kyle and Amy would reflect on the possible factors that play into the problem before choosing an appropriate response. If the talkers are friends, for example, perhaps their proximity to each other has become a distraction and they need to be separated. If the children are restless, they might need more opportunities to move around. If they are confused by Kyle’s teaching methods, or if they are acting out in frustration, the teachers would formulate a plan for training students to ask for help or to voice their grievances in appropriate ways. Finally, if the issues appear to stem mainly from rudeness, or a disregard for learning, the teachers should set up an age-appropriate consequence, coupled with a con-

versation about the behavior and how it impacts others in the classroom. To summarize, those who view discipline as teaching consider the nature of misbehavior before they respond to it.

### Persevering

What if Kyle and Amy’s first cooperative attempts to solve the problem result in little or no change? When misbehavior continues, teachers can easily become disillusioned and turn to retaliatory

measures or write young people off as unmanageable. What advice does the teaching mindset propose for those who face resistance in classroom discipline?

Another parallel between curriculum teaching and classroom discipline provides guidance.

Teaching—moving learners toward content goals and helping those who struggle—is a process. Even with carefully crafted lesson plans, effective teachers always monitor learning and revise their strategies according to the progress children are making. Corrective discipline, likewise, should be seen as a process. When students ignore or show opposition to correction, those of a teaching mindset subdue the urge to fight back or give up. Instead they continue to investigate probable causes of behavior and persevere in their search for the most helpful course of action.

Returning to the problem under consideration, we see that chatting in class obstructs efforts to build a learning community. Therefore, Kyle needs to hold students accountable. He could preserve relationships by using a calm demeanor and by making confrontations away from the audience of the class. Furthermore, even consequences can be assigned in a manner that conveys sensitivity. Penalties themselves are seldom the cause for fractured teacher-student bonds; rather, it’s the spirit in which consequences are given that compromises or preserves relationships. Amy could provide valuable assistance in this process if she were to stop thinking of the situation as a battle and begin to view it as a teaching opportunity, an opportunity to persist in the work of helping children function

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as a learning community.

Because children are created differently, and because each responds to the world in a unique way, no single program exists for persevering through lingering discipline challenges. As a general rule, those who operate with a teaching mindset do their best to think in terms of *what students need, not what they deserve*. Some children need the consistent and predictable calmness of a teacher to quiet their willful spirit, for example, whereas others need a teacher's firmness in order to grasp the seriousness of the situation. Some children become more cooperative when they experience a sense of control, and others change after they see things from a new perspective. Finally, still others need a different set of expectations. Regardless of the factors that set misbehaving students apart from each other, all children need to know that they are loved, that their teachers see the positive aspects of their created nature in spite of the shortcomings.

### **Case Studies**

In view of the fact that children and situations are unique, perhaps the best way to demonstrate "perseverance" with the teaching model is to survey a set of case studies. The following examples represent situations that were addressed using the teaching model, either in my own classroom or in the classrooms of other teachers who have collaborated with me in working through classroom discipline issues. All names have been changed to protect identities.

#### Accommodating Differences

James snarled about every math assignment he was given. As he worked, he would knock his books to the floor and break his pencil points. After talking with James several times about his attitude and the way it was affecting his classmates, Beth noticed that James seemed less exasperated when his friend Daniel worked near him. The aggravated behavior, she eventually realized, was James' vent for his frustration about feeling incompetent. Because he could not verbalize the cause for his anger, it spilled out in disruptive behavior. To settle the irritability—and provide a confidence boost—Beth and James worked out an arrangement where James and his friend could work as study buddies.

He was not allowed to drop his books or break his pencils anymore; but if he felt frustrated, he could ask Daniel to sit by him. Daniel was not permitted to do the work for James, but he could offer encouragement and advice. This alternative soothed James' irritation and improved his attitude about math. Often he was able to solve the problems on his own, simply because the proximity of his friend gave him the confidence he needed.

Some days Victoria was focused in class; other days she would pass notes and whisper to her friends. Changing Victoria's position in the room yielded no improvement; neither did separating her from her friends at break time. After contemplating her behavior for a few weeks, Adam speculated that Vic was hypersensitive to friendship difficulties, and one day an intercepted note confirmed his suspicions. Adam took a chance on asking Vic and her friend if they would like a moment to work out their problem in the hallway. Standing by the door where he could monitor both the class and the two girls, he saw Victoria and her friend courteously and efficiently settle their differences. On subsequent days, when other problems arose, Vic began to ask if she could have additional brief meetings. Adam granted those requests, at first, because the talks calmed her anxieties, but eventually he suggested that she wait for a more opportune time during the lesson, or even until the next break. Knowing that the option to meet immediately was usually available if she really needed it seemed to make it easier for her to delay the meetings, and eventually her need to leave class faded away altogether.

#### Accentuating the Positive

Whenever Ms. Clark's attention was diverted to other parts of the room, she could hear Trevor laughing or causing his neighbors to giggle. Occasionally she would turn to catch him out of his seat, "playing tag" with someone in his vicinity or throwing paper wads. Confrontations and detentions led to remorseful apologies but no sustained change in behavior. Despite her annoyance, Ms. Clark decided to become more deliberate about spotting the positive characteristics about his nature. The first thing she noticed was that if a book caught Trevor's interest, he could tune out every distraction until he had finished the story. In addition, he could re-

call statistics with incredible accuracy, and he often used his knowledge to win debates with friends about sports and electronic games.

One time, during a talk with Trevor about a recent disruption, Ms. Clark mentioned Trevor's aptitudes—his keen sense of humor, his ability to focus on books, and his gifts for retrieving information and engaging in debate. Considering those abilities, she pointed out that Trevor was probably able to learn things at a quicker pace in relation to his peers and that his mind needed something to do when it became restless. Continuing, she asked him to use his gifts as a way to contribute to lessons instead of detract from them. The next time he felt fidgety, for example, perhaps he could share something funny in relation to the lesson topic, or challenge the teacher's thinking if her statements seemed inconsistent with his own knowledge. Apparently relieved that the teacher could see the positive traits of his nature, Trevor took the suggestions to heart and began to work on his positive classroom participation. Because he was never able to fully overcome the temptations to draw negative attention to himself, Ms. Clark continued with the confrontations and detentions as needed. However, encouragement and setting positive goals improved Trevor's overall classroom demeanor and diminished the frequency of his disruptions.

### Redirecting Manipulative Students

Katherine was a complainer whose discontentment often spread to others because of her influential nature. "Mr. Adams, shouldn't class be fun sometimes?" or "We always do stuff with books at school; why do we have to read right now?" When she asked questions like those, a number of her friends would immediately join in the bellyaching.

Student input is fundamental in learning communities, but public protests obstruct the goals of a learning community. Those who whine, it seems, often care more about manipulating or creating conflict than they do about improving their situations. Mr. Adams, therefore, usually reminded Katherine

to talk with him at break time about her concerns or to use the suggestion box. Katherine continued her pattern, though, despite the reminders.

Adams soon grew irritated with the behavior, but he also wanted to teach Katherine a more respectful way of voicing her grievances. With that goal in mind, he asked her to stay inside during the next break. "Katherine, I can see that you're unhappy with some of the choices I've made about our lesson today. But when you complain in ways that cause others to join in, I feel like I need to defend myself." With a smile he added, "Maybe that's why I sometimes seem a little pigheaded about your suggestions. If you become upset with me, Katherine, I sincerely want to know. But you have to express your opinions in ways that are respectful."

Anxious to rejoin her friends outside, Katherine apologized and assured Mr. Adams that she would work harder on keeping her opinions to herself. Adams accepted the apology, but he wasn't convinced that she would follow through without a bit of "practice." So he handed Katherine a slip of paper and showed her how to write her most recent complaint in the form of a suggestion. After the recommendation was penciled out, he told her to fold the paper and insert it in the suggestion box near his desk. Mr. Adams walked over to the suggestion box, removed the paper, and read it. He thanked Katherine for her suggestion and briefly explained why reading was the teaching strategy he had chosen for the goal he was trying to accomplish that day. He also told her that he was willing to try her suggestions occasionally, as long as she could demonstrate that her proposals would make the learning more meaningful or effective. Assured that he and Katherine had reached an understanding, he thanked her again and invited her to go and join her friends outside.

### Solving Problems Through Collaboration

Judy dreaded seventh-period band rehearsals. Students would walk into class late and take their time at getting ready to play. Whenever she stopped

As a general rule, those who operate with a teaching mindset do their best to think in terms of *what students need*, not *what they deserve*.

songs to work with sections of the band, those in other sections would chat with each other or play random notes on their instruments. Counting students tardy and taking points away resulted in little improvement.

Exasperated, Judy decided to try a different approach. One day as the students arrived, they heard the recording of a band playing on the sound system. Judy told them to leave their instruments in their places on the shelf and proceed quietly to their seats. The novelty of this different start to class captured the students' attention; some picked up on the melody and hummed along, and others tapped or drummed along with the rhythm on their chairs.

When the song ended, Judy started a conversation with the students about the song, which she had taped during a rehearsal with some other students earlier that day. She asked them if they enjoyed the music, and several said that they did. When she followed by asking the band members if they thought their band could play that well, a few thought they could. She continued by inviting students to tell her the problems that were currently holding them back and what they could do together to achieve that sort of sound in the songs they were rehearsing.

The group brainstormed a list of several ideas, some of which included getting ready for rehearsal on time and listening better. To keep the list manageable, Judy asked the students to pick three for their focus over the next two weeks of rehearsals. At that end of that time period, she and the students would assess whether they had made progress toward those goals and add new goals as they saw fit. Thankfully, the plan resolved the problem: the students took ownership and showed willingness to work toward a solution.

### Teaching Empathy

After school one day, the custodian complained to Tyrone and Amira about the boys' restroom in their hallway. She said that she usually had to spend more time cleaning it than the other restrooms in school, and that today their boys had "totally trashed it." Tyrone was upset. He suggested that they lock the bathrooms during class and line up the boys to use the facility before each recess. "If they can't act like middle schoolers," he said, "we're

going to have to treat them like the primary students." Amira, also perturbed by the lack of consideration, agreed that his consequence seemed logical, but she suggested that they first try presenting the problem to the students from the perspective of the janitor.

The next day, when recess began, they dismissed the girls and asked the boys of both sections to gather in Tyrone's room for a couple of minutes. The teachers calmly described the mess that had been made in the bathroom and explained the work that some of them had created for the custodian the previous day. "Disgusting," one of the boys remarked. The teachers also noted that the custodian was not able to complete the task of cleaning their restroom until long after the students had gone home for the day. Tyrone and Amira continued by saying that if the problem persisted, they would have no choice but to allow only one student to use the restroom at a time. After the boys assured their teachers that they would change their behavior, they let them go for recess. The "lesson" seemed to have hit its mark. Next afternoon the custodian told Tyrone and Amira that the restroom was not only much cleaner, it looked practically unused.

### **Conclusion**

"Conflict discipline" perceives misbehavior as a struggle that must be overcome or avoided. Under the influence of this perception, some teachers react against children through their discipline measures, whereas others turn a blind eye to wrongdoing. Conversely, a teaching model opts to view behavior problems as learning struggles, minimizing the impulse to fight or flee in the face of wrongdoing and, ultimately, provide the guidance children need.

Just as with typical classroom instruction, the discipline strategies teachers choose depend largely upon the students and their particular needs. Sometimes teachers show a new way of acting, for example, or provide extra practice. In other instances they may offer a different way of thinking, or help students to see a situation from someone else's perspective. Occasionally, they may modify their expectations for students or provide tools that help children overcome personal obstacles. When consequences become necessary, teachers endeavor to choose penalties that help wayward children

learn from their mistakes.

The Scriptural foundation for this teaching model lies partly in God's call to speak and act in love instead of to merely obey. Those who operate with a teaching mindset guide young people in the journey of learning how to love by teaching them to function as contributing members in a learning community.

Furthermore, a teaching mindset honors the reality that children are created—not mass produced—and that each perceives and responds to the world in different ways. In view of the uniqueness of each child, this model strives for the response that would be most helpful in each situation. Finally, a teaching mindset imparts grace—not flighty grace that ignores wrong, but grace that

provides what students need in order to escape the path of wrong.

The case studies provided show that a teaching mindset can be used to work through a variety of classroom discipline issues, even in situations where traditional discipline plans prove unsuccessful. Those who strive to apply a teaching mindset to discipline, however, should understand that the classroom atmosphere shapes the outcome of any discipline strategy. In my recent book, *Beyond Control: Heart-Centered Classroom Climate and Discipline*, I try to help teachers who desire to cultivate an atmosphere that grows communities of learners by sharing discipline strategies for those who struggle against the attitudes that drive student behavior.