



How Teacher Personality and Style Affect the Growth of Self Confidence

Part # I – Positive Teacher Characteristics

Introduction

More and more, teachers are becoming a primary influence in children's lives, and in some cases they may be the only healthy adults some children encounter during the day. Twenty five years ago family structures were different, and teachers did not require the depth and variety of social/emotional skills that are required of today's teachers. Teachers today are not only educators, but therapists, parent substitutes, mentors, advocates, and more.

Therefore, it stands to reason that a teacher's personality and teaching style can have a profound impact on children's academic performance and general development. The importance of teaching style in creating a positive environment in which student confidence is fostered is the discussion of this series. It will be very important to step back and evaluate how you are defined as a teacher, your goals in teaching, and the manner in which you present yourself to students. Does your teaching style allow for an environment where confidence, security, performance and well being can really be reinforced or an environment that may actually impede the these and other factors in children?

No single aspect of a teacher's personality may be responsible for improving or impeding the growth of confidence in a student. For example, a very strict teacher who is fair, kind, genuine, logical, and nurturing may facilitate the growth of self confidence and well being despite being very strict. On the other hand, a teacher who is funny but unstructured and disorganized may not facilitate children's self confidence or enhance performance. Despite the fact that the children love the teacher, they may not gain confidence or academic growth if the teacher cannot provide the real-life success experiences necessary for the growth of self confidence, academic performance, security and personal growth.

Part I-Positive Teaching Characteristics

GENUINENESS

This quality is exhibited by teachers who:

- Create a student-centered classroom environment
- Go beyond what is expected of them to promote student' well being
- Are easily approachable
- Are honest and up-front with students

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- Follow through on what they say
- Are consistent in their methods
- Are not fake or hypocritical

FAIRNESS

Teachers with this quality:

- Can admit to making a mistake
- Give assignments that take into account student' needs and levels of ability
- Give assignments that are reasonable in length with the main goal being feelings of success and accomplishment
- Give tests that stick to what has been taught
- Take a commonsense approach to grading homework and essays
- Give helpful comments for improvement
- Give students advance notice of quizzes and tests
- Do not seek to “get” children by giving unfairly difficult assignments and tests

ORGANIZATION

Teachers who have this characteristic will:

- Maintain order and routine in their classroom
- Provide students with structure and logical rules that apply equally to all
- Teach student to organize their materials, desks and lockers
- Have well-planned lessons with logical presentations and relevant follow-up assignments
- Hand back tests, essays, and class work in a reasonable amount of time

LOGIC AND COMMON SENSE

This quality is expressed by teachers who:

- Recognize that students, like adults, have good and bad days
- Understand that forces outside the classroom may be affecting a student's performance
- Know the classroom is not the center of the universe
- Know the difference between symptoms and problems and look for the root of the symptoms rather than label them in negative terms
- Knows and believes that no child wants to fail in school and that failure is a symptom that needs to be investigated

ABILITY TO SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES

Teachers with this ability will:

- Take a stand to promote fairness and enforce classroom rules, even if it makes them unpopular
- Set clear and fair boundaries for students who may be out of control
- Run the classroom with a sense of conviction rather than by fear and intimidation

SENSE OF HUMOR OR LIGHTHEARTEDNESS

This quality is exhibited by teachers who:

- Place priority on important issues and understand that to err is human
- Allow students to explore their “child” side without admonishing them to grow up
- Are able to laugh at themselves when they make a mistake
- Understand the difference between telling jokes and making fun of or belittling students
- Know that no child should be the focus of a joke

ABILITY TO GIVE COMPLIMENTS

Teachers who possess this quality will:

- Spontaneously compliment students for their achievements and for trying their best
- Find positive things to tell students before making suggestions on how to improve something
- Make constructive comments on tests and essays without devaluing students’ efforts
- Provide students with small notes and cards recognizing a good job, a commonsense decision, assistance to another student, and so forth

ABILITY TO ADMIT MISTAKE

Teachers who possess this quality will:

- Admit their mistakes to let students see that mistakes present a learning opportunity
- Not be afraid to show students how to correct a decision that is obviously wrong
- Are solution oriented rather than blame oriented

WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN

Teachers who can listen:

- Put aside time to sit down with students who need to say something
- Understand that reaching out to an adult is a difficult step for many students, especially for those who have no one to listen to them at home
- Teach students that being listened to does not always mean that someone will agree or be able to do what they ask

APPROACHABILITY

Teachers with this quality:

- Have the ability to make students feel at ease when they come to ask a question
- Have a high approachability factor and students never hesitate to approach them for any reason
- Exhibit a sense of warmth and comfort
- Cultivate an atmosphere in which children do not fear negative reactions
- Command respect, do not demand respect