



How Teacher Personality and Style Affects the Growth of Self Confidence

Part II- Negative 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 II-Negative Teacher Characteristics

Now let us take a look at some personality characteristics and teaching styles that increase the chance of children developing negative self esteem or low self worth.

EGO TEACHING

Teachers with this quality:

- Have unrealistically high standards that create intense stress in their students
- Give excessively long homework assignments designed to impress parents how good a job he/she is doing
- Give difficult tests that require children to learn minutiae
- Have grading systems that create numerous failures
- Demand respect by frightening and intimidating students

EXCESSIVE CRITICISM

This characteristic is exhibited by teachers who:

- Criticize children in public
- Criticize more often than compliment
- Believe that compliments and rewards reduce his/her authority
- Use sarcasm as a means of motivation
- Are quick to blame a child's lack of progress or poor grades on the student rather than analyzing the situation for possible teaching problems

UNREASONABILITY

This characteristic is exhibited when teachers:

- Refuse to listen to a child's explanation
- Make demands without giving reasons
- Provide work and experiences that are too difficult for children to finish without parental help

NARCISSISM

This aspect of a personality is reflected when teachers:

- Use children to keep the spotlight on themselves
- Give a great deal of work but rarely hand it back or hand it back with few or no comments
- Focus attention on themselves rather than the needs of the students
- Take it out on students if they have a bad day
- Are always the victim, always complain the most, and always brag that they have the most difficult class

RIGIDITY

This quality is expressed by teachers who:

- Take everything seriously
- Are unwilling to change their minds
- Are unwilling to admit mistakes
- Will stick with something even if it makes little sense or has little educational value

PUNISHMENT ORIENTATION

Teachers with this mentality:

- Punish students for relatively small infractions
- Make a public spectacle of students
- Hold students' behavior or performance up to their peers for ridicule
- Always see students' explanations as excuses or attempts to control the situation
- Enforce rules with harsh, unrealistic consequences

DISORGANIZATION

Teachers with this quality tend to:

- Change the rules frequently, thus creating confusion in students
- Give tests or quizzes without letting students know in advance
- Frequently lose students' work
- Appear to be “winging it” with no real plan or structure

UNPREDICTABILITY

Teachers with this quality will:

- Change rules without informing students, sometimes until they break them
- Have different rules for different students
- Be nice to a student one day and not another, for no apparent reason

LACK OF CONTROL

Teachers who exhibit this quality:

- Have no set classroom rules for discipline or opportunities for reward
- Always seem to be yelling and screaming
- Make extreme threats that rarely are enforced
- Let the students “run the show”

CREATE ANXIETY IN STUDENTS

Teachers who do this:

- Say things to scare children (for instance, “You’ll be lucky if you get a 65 on tomorrow’s test”)
- Never offer reassurance before or after tests
- Constantly inform students of how much trouble they will be in if they don’t do well on this test or assignment
- Create self-doubt in students

“GOTCHA” MENTALITY

Teachers who have this characteristic:

- Hope to catch students making mistakes
- Always correct students for breaking rules, no matter how minor
- Will seize any opportunity to exhibit power over students
- Will publicly broadcast what they uncover about students' infractions

OVERREACTIVITY

Teachers who exhibit this quality will:

- Turn minor events into major crises
- Enforce punishments inappropriate to the situation
- Scream and yell at students for minor infractions

Although successful experiences are the most critical factor in building confidence, a positive teacher with a constructive teaching style can go a long way toward breaking down initial resistance barriers. Positive or negative, a teacher's personality and teaching style, even for one year, can directly affect a student for the rest of his/her life.