

Why Coming On Too Strong Will Force A Mutiny In Your Classroom

Whether starting over from scratch or **opening a new school year**, many teachers come on too strong when teaching classroom management.

Demanding and forewarning, growling and glaring. Even the mildest-mannered teachers can become overbearing when it comes to laying down the law in the classroom.

And although most don't consciously or overtly try to scare students into behaving, there is an unmistakable undercurrent of intimidation in the way they present their classroom management plan.

The thinking is that in this day and age you *have* to talk tough. You *have* to carry yourself with a demanding and aggressive presence or your students will walk all over you.

But it isn't true.

Fear and intimidation belong in the dark ages of classroom management.

The truth is, you can't force today's students into behaving. You can't strong-arm them into listening to you, following your rules, or even caring what you have to say.

You can try – as so many do – but it doesn't work.

It will backfire on you every time.

Here's why:

It creates an us-against-them mentality.

The moment you crossover from being seen as the trusted leader to being viewed as an antagonist or enemy, bad things begin to happen. And so by aggressively driving home your classroom plan, rather than focusing on the teaching and learning of it, you alienate your students before your plan is even in place.

It frames classroom management in a negative light.

When you present behavior expectations with an abrasive, new-sheriff-in-town attitude, it causes students to see classroom management as something negative – as something to object to and rail against. The truth is, effective classroom management is **a wonderful and freeing benefit** for your students, as well as for you. And you have to present it as such.

It boxes you in.

Coming on too strong will force you to behave similarly whenever you have to deal with misbehavior. Otherwise, your students won't take you seriously. In other words, if you try to enforce a consequence with a calm and pleasant demeanor, for example, but you've already established yourself as a tough-talking disciplinarian, they'll assume you don't really mean it.

It turns you into a mean teacher.

Once you take on the persona of a “mean” teacher, you’ll have to carry it with you for the rest of the year – unless you learn a better way. And what can be so frustrating to a lot of teachers is that, despite being easygoing most of the time, that 5% when dealing with misbehavior marks you as “mean” and unlikable in the eyes of your students.

It makes building rapport and influence a near-impossibility.

I’ve heard teachers claim that they don’t mind if **students dislike them**. This may be true, but when your students don’t like you, your ability to build rapport and influence goes down the drain. And without this ability, you’ll always struggle with classroom management. You’ll need that “mean” persona, and much more, just to keep a lid on our classroom.

It encourages rebelliousness.

If your students view your classroom management plan as something that keeps them from enjoying school, rather than the very thing that protects and ensures their right to enjoy school, then they will rebel against it with all their might. It will become something to push against, outsmart, and get away with, causing them to sneak misbehavior behind your back at every turn.

A Better Way

When your focus is on *teaching* classroom management – through detailed modeling, role-play, and practice – rather than trying to convince students through your tough-as-nails posture that you really mean it, you’re free to be yourself, even have fun while presenting your plan.

And the good news is that teaching classroom management in this naturally charismatic way is so much more effective – both in the short and the long term. Your students will absorb the true purpose of classroom management, seeing it as a necessary but liberating benefit rather than a downpour on their parade.

Whether it's the first day of school or **a need to push the restart button** on classroom management, it is the first step to creating the class you really want. It is the first step to making your classroom a place students look forward to coming to every day.

It is the first step to a **dream class**.