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DISCIPLINE OR DISASTER?

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DISCIPLINE AS A WAY OF LIFE

Discipline is learned. It must be. Jack and Jill come into this world without control. First, Jack and Jill learn to sleep through the night so daddy can get enough rest to take his seat the next day on the New York Stock Exchange, or to sweep the cigarette butts out of Joe's Place. This discipline is learned to please someone else. They did not ask for it, but they will be doing it the remainder of their lives. Jack will obey the traffic rules because he suspects some cop may be hiding behind the corner billboard. He will mortgage his soul because his wife needs a new coat, gloves, and sports car to keep up with Mrs. Texas, who has a newly gushing oil well. This kind of discipline is imposed by other people—not for Jack's good but for theirs. Jill's disciplining will be much the same as Jack's.

Jack and Jill will be disciplined for their own good, too. Jill will have to eat her porridge, green vegetables, and vitamins, not for the neighbor's well-being but for her own growth. She will be disciplined to stay out of the street and to refuse rides with strangers for the sake of her own safety. Later she will learn courtesy for Aunt Lucy, love for Jack, loyalty to her school, and devotion to her country.

Jacks and Jills come into the world, not with discipline itself, but with the capacity to acquire it. To practice discipline as a lifelong process for their own and other people's good, to learn discipline or face disaster: this is the life into which they are thrust.
Basis for Discipline

It all began a long time ago. Adam lived a peaceful, uncontrolled life until he traded a rib for a partner named Eve. Then all hell broke loose. First thing he knew, Eve was lying on the couch of her favorite serpent, putting mickeys in Adam's apples, and preening herself with fig leaves. Next came, not the leering villain from Bank of Paradise, but God himself to foreclose on the homestead, Eden.

In due time, to Adam's amazement, came little creatures; he and Eve called them Cain and Abel. What was poor Adam to do, with no corner drugstore loaded with Pablum, no Disney Comics, no Dr. Spock, and the kids bawling their heads off from colic and cussedness! Furthermore, Eve was spending more time with the serpent, not because she was untrue to Adam, but to get away from the howling brats! The very welkin echoed the cries of disorder, and there was no discipline in the land!

As the boys grew up, Hammurabi was not around to codify some rules, so disaster forged ahead in its race with discipline. The result? Cain killed Abel; and Adam and Eve had no Forest Lawn for Abel and no Juvenile Hall for Cain. Eve busied herself making mini and maxi fig fashions while Adam chewed up some fermented berries and hid himself in a cave. From that time on, things went from bad to so much worse that God stepped in with a flood. He later sent Moses to Sinai to give man some rules to live by, rules that would replace disaster with discipline.

Kinds of Discipline

Discipline is not punishment. Nor is it an organized body of classical knowledge fashioned for full professors and empty students. Webster defines "to discipline": "to develop by instruction and exercise"; and "disciple" as "one who receives instruction from another." Discipline is teaching and learning. Discipline is of two kinds: imposed and self-discipline.

This concept of discipline is quite different from the popular concept of discipline as punishment. Horace Mann wrote in 1847:

In one of the schools of those to whom I ascribe the motto, Force, Fear, Pain—consisting of about 250 scholars—there were
328 separate floggings in one week of five days, or an average of 65 3/5 each day. In another 18 boys were flogged in two hours in the presence of a stranger. In another 12 or 15 in one hour.

Self-discipline is Jack’s or Jill’s system of organized behavior designed to promote self-interest while contributing to the welfare of others. Imposed discipline, in its best sense, is a code of conduct prescribed for the highest welfare of the individual and of the society in which he lives.

The extreme opposite of either kind of discipline is anarchy. Anarchy in school leads inevitably to disaster for the teacher and for the students.

Good teaching prevents discipline problems. Teachers who spend more time in preparation will spend less in trying to get Jack and Jill on the learning track.

**Sources of Discipline**

In the case of Adam and Eve, God was the disciplinarian. In ancient Greece, Zeus flung his thunderbolts and sent Apollo burning up the sky with his flaming chariot. The Romans and the English designed senates and parliaments to replace disaster with disciplined organization. Greek states and the New England town meeting derived their authority from all the people. Dictators like Alexander, Napoleon, and Hitler smeared the land with blood in an authority which satisfied their personal whims and lust for power.

In more recent times, the dictators have been dethroned, town meetings have become crowded, and gods and governments receive less enthusiastic allegiance. Representatives of the people make the laws; college activists break them. Parents quarrel about authority until the kids put them in their place. School administrators formulate discipline policy until the teachers tear it to shreds in the Negotiating Council. The PTA cries for discipline because the need for it is so obvious in the homes.

The best source of discipline is from within oneself. Self-discipline is the highest discipline. Once they have gained it, Jack and Jill like it because it lets them do what they would do anyhow. Teachers like student self-discipline as long as it directs
the students to do what the teacher wants them to do. Principals like self-discipline as long as it keeps rowdies from burning down the library. But when self-discipline fails, law and order must be imposed from without or the scene changes to riot and disaster.

When Jack and Jill face a world of changing values, vacillating application of rules, and alternating sources of discipline, they must be as befuddled as Adam was when he was thrown out of Eden. Everyone needs security. There must be some acceptable source that makes sense.

Self-discipline does not, like Athena, spring full-blown from the head of Zeus; it has to develop. When Jack and Jill open their eyes to a complex world of vaccinations, do-it-yourself moral standards, income tax, and moon shots, they are as devoid of discipline as their bottoms are of threads. At that moment, with a smarting spank, a lifelong system of self- and imposed discipline begins. Jack and Jill have no self-discipline at birth; and, as self-discipline develops, imposed discipline declines.

Parents and teachers are the chief imposers. They must be. Children and teenagers prate, "I can take care of myself!" This is Jack's way of saying, "I know all about drugs, gangs, accidents, sex, jurisprudence and acne." But he does not. No more than Jill knows all about handling the third martini, cheating on exams, or midnight rides with strangers.

Parents and teachers must impose discipline on a diminishing scale. The mother's kiss or the father's swat may have been appropriate at six but not at sixteen. Parents and teachers must recognize that the amount and type of disciplinary control must be constantly changing. This is the hardest lesson that parents, particularly, have to learn. They fail to let their little Jacks and Jills grow up. But grow they will, and Jack and Jill must assume responsibility and discipline themselves as parental responsibility ceases.

Current Need for Discipline

Discipline is not old hat, Model-T, or on its way out. It is as current as the latest Apollo, space shuttle, or control of the genes.
Discipline is not only here to stay but is to become more and more sophisticated and indispensable.

When Adam or Cro-Magnon slunk through primeval shrubbery with club, fist, or hatchet, ready to dash the brains out of living creatures and gobble them up on the spot, there was a noticeable absence of traffic signals, report cards, and keep-off-the-grass signs. All that has changed. With the burgeoning of population and the complexity of society, governments work overtime cranking out laws in the hope that some of them will be obeyed.

This thing of doing what comes naturally has produced so many Jacks and Jills that elbow room is almost as scarce as passenger pigeons. Density brings conflict. Fights break out over territoriality. Standing room only becomes a kicking duel. Discipline must step in and save all the Jacks and Jills from disaster.

Inner-city crimes against persons and property have reached near-disaster proportions. The rising rate of bodily injury, the widespread pilfering of goods, the increasingly young age of the offenders, and the brutality of social marauders indicate that disaster has the upper hand over discipline. Jill is no longer safe even when accompanied by Jack. Neither is Jack safe. The “fair fight” has given way to gangs that will cut Jack’s throat, dump him in a canyon, and rape Jill. If Jack and Jill establish a home, they will no longer throw away the key. Burglars may steal their color TV, silver, loose change, guns, and jewelry, then desecrate their family pictures, books, and documents as a final insult.

Jack and Jill can no longer live in unlocked houses, walk on their own streets at night, or open their door before looking when the bell rings. Discipline, law, order, and security are needed as never before.

Today’s dire need for discipline directs a challenge to schools, homes, churches, and government. Our chief concern here is that schools do their part in bringing about greater self-discipline within Jack and Jill in addition to creating respect for an imposed discipline that will uphold the sanctity of persons and property of all Jacks and Jills. The sad commentary on educators is that most of the marauders who prowl and prey are currently, or were recently, in our schools.

Actual physical attacks upon classroom teachers are not uncommon. For his study at the University of Southern California,
John Quinn Jones surveyed some large urban high schools and found that one teacher out of every 100 would be physically attacked each year. Teenagers 14 and 15 years of age with a history of behavior problems were the most frequent attackers. Most of them had attacked teachers before—some as many as four times.

Parents and Discipline

Through the last four decades, parents have been in the gradual process of abdication. The head of the household gave way to joint husband-and-wife powers which encouraged children’s playing one head against the other. When a spank-the-bottom parent was cancelled out by a permissive mate, the kids ran wild through the home and right into the classroom. Permissiveness is the dust bowl that has blown Grapes-of-Wrath children straight into Miss Remington’s second grade class. And the parents? Either they are nowhere to be found or they say, “I just can’t control Jack (or Jill) any more!”

No parents in all the civilized world today dodge their responsibility to the extent that mothers and dads do in this country. Young girls elsewhere have chaperones and young boys have work. But child labor laws have freed children for the street. Our new trends of affluence, rebellion from Puritanism, easily broken homes, church denominationalism, pseudo-psychology, and on-going wars have left parents free to do some swinging themselves and to hell with Jack and Jill!

This pendulum swing to license must be reversed. A Phi Delta Kappa educator was visiting the secondary schools in Moscow. He asked about discipline. His guide reported that there were no discipline problems for the teachers. Then he explained that if a child would not cooperate, he was deemed a poor citizen; the parents of poor citizens lost privileges: state wages were cut and there were no advancements. No luxuries would be forthcoming, and the family could be moved to a smaller apartment.

The authors have had experience with the American Dependents Schools in Europe and the Pacific. When a child in those schools became a serious problem, the young GI was called in by the Commanding Officer on base. Whatever happened at
home that night seemed to work, for Jack came to school next morning sitting light in the saddle, with the semblance of a halo—no more discipline problem!

The authors believe that parents should be held responsible, legally and morally, for their child’s damage to other persons, property, the educational program, and the general decorum of the classroom. When parents lose privileges along with their rowdy offspring, there will be much less, “Oh, I can’t do a thing about Jack any more.” In places where courts have held parents responsible for teenage vandalism, such depredations have decreased. Schools, enforcement officers, and the courts must not be as permissive with parents as the parents have been with their children.

Students and Discipline

If students do not pound on the principal’s door, write petitions, and protest for discipline, it is because they have always enjoyed a measure of decorum in the schools. Few men hold demonstrations demanding air to breathe until someone steps on their oxygen cord or smogs up their city. Discipline has been taken for granted by students. But if all rules were suddenly repealed and unprincipled students were left to prey upon the persons and property of the weak, students themselves would raise their voices against such pedagogical cannibalism. The school itself would last only until the last bedraggled student had fled and arsonists had burned down the principal’s office. School discipline is indispensable for student security. With security established, learning can take place.

Criteria for School Discipline

School discipline should protect and nurture the physical, social, mental, and emotional growth of Jack and Jill. Rules should be made, first, to protect persons and property, and second, to protect the right to participate in educational programs. A rule that outlaws blood-curdling yells or use of blow horns makes sense because it forbids impediments to learning. A rule against the wearing of favorite-candidate buttons, however, would be questionable, at least, and unconstitutional, at most.
Disciplinary rules and their enforcement must be reasonable, legal, constitutional, and acceptable to a majority of the enforcers and enforcers.

Capricious, hateful, and vengeful rules have no place, from kindergarten through college. If rules are made in an unreasonable manner, the head of the school is apt to find himself in the courts as the disciplinee rather than the discipliner. The same is true in the application of rules. Application must have a semblance of due process through clear definition of rule violation, reasonable charges, a fair hearing for the accused, and punishment that has least chance of doing physical, mental, or emotional harm.

The area involving regulations that are made for school efficiency should be settled on campus. The one guiding principle should be: DOES THIS BEHAVIOR INTERFERE WITH THE SCHOOL PROGRAM? Rowdiness in the classroom, group truancy, and blockage of hallways interfere with the ongoing educational process. Curlicues in the hair, exceptional but unobscene dress, and peaceful expression of peculiar ideas rarely interfere with learning opportunities to the extent that corrections need be applied. If such behavior is barred, the one establishing the prohibition had better consider the reasonableness of his decision.

In recent years, students have become more rebellious and anti-establishment. The extremists have committed misdemeanors and felonies. They have attacked faculty and students. They have destroyed public and private property. This kind of behavior calls for cooperation between school officials and law enforcement officers. These actions are covered in the criminal code. As opposed to breaking a school rule by entering the cafeteria from the side door, they concern all of the people. In cases of infractions of criminal or civil code, the school administrator should call upon constituted authorities and not take the law into his own hands.

Public schools are creations of the state legislature. They are governed by educational and governmental codes drawn up by the people's representatives. Boards of Education are provided by the Code. The powers of the Board are delegated to district and building administrators for enforcement.

At all times, the successful school administrator must know
the law and understand the correct procedures for enforcement on the school campus. When in doubt, he should call the county counsel. If the superintendent or principal makes a mistake which gets into court, the county counsel will be called upon to defend him. The counsel will be much happier to defend someone who has requested and followed advice, rather than someone who became excited and blundered in the wrong direction. If a statutory law has been violated, a call to the police or sheriff’s office is in order. If the offender is known, this should generally be done with a simultaneous call to the home.

An example for this course of action would be evidence of the sale of drugs on school grounds. The principal who tries to be a “nice guy” by not notifying the parents “this time” may find on the second offense that he has consorted in violation of the law. It would be hard to justify his silence. It is better to examine district policy, to check with the authorities, and to follow their advice. The sale of drugs or the brandishing of a switchblade are not problems for the principal’s jurisdiction.

With respect to discipline, the school administrator should know the law and know how the law has been interpreted. The administrator must understand that courts in various states differ in their interpretations. And that the Supreme Court sometimes reverses previous opinions.

Rules regarding attendance at assemblies, salute to the flag, and wearing insignia on behalf of “causes” may relate to the First or Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution or to state constitutions. The people’s representatives make the laws but the laws are not final until they are tested in the courts. Court decisions are not irrevocable until they come from the United States Supreme Court.

As an example of how legal decisions vary, as early as 1943 the U.S. Supreme Court declared in the historic Barnette case that to coerce a student to salute the flag was violating the Fourteenth Amendment. The salute did not instill patriotism but merely caused the student to conform for his own self-interest. In contrast, the courts held in 1965 and 1967 (Leonard v. School Committee in Attleboro and Davis v. Firment respectively) that school boards had the right to prescribe the type and cleanliness of boys’ hair-dos. But in the Myers v. Arcata UHSD, 1966, the
court held that hair style was more a matter of personal expression than a condition that would endanger health, safety, or the school program. And so it goes. The courts have ruled upon whether Jill can wear slacks or campaign buttons at school and whether Jack and Jill can have morning prayers. In some cases, the judges have divided as they did in the appellate court decision over the wearing of black armbands; the U.S. Supreme Court, however, ruled in favor of the practice as a freedom guaranteed by the First Amendment.

The governing board, the superintendent, and the principal must remember that they are responsible for, and free to make, rules as long as the rules do not conflict with statutory or constitutional provisions. To stay current with constitutional implications in discipline, the administrator should peruse organizational publications, confer with the county counsel, call upon the office of the county or state superintendent of schools, watch for the attorney general’s opinions, and review decisions of the courts. With this information in hand and with the wisdom of Solomon, he may apply enough common sense and reason to stay out of disciplinary trouble himself.
DISCIPLINE POLICIES FOR THE DISTRICT, 
THE BUILDING, AND THE CLASSROOM

School attendance for Jack and Jill is a privilege, not an absolute right. To qualify for the privilege of schooling, they have certain responsibilities. Among these responsibilities is respect for the personal property and the welfare of others. Discipline implies a measure of self-control. Since self-control is learned, it should increase as the student advances through the consecutive levels of the school. Imposed discipline should decrease as self-discipline increases.

To avoid anarchy and disaster in a school situation, there must be positive regulations and standards for student behavior. These policies should be expressed in writing for the district, the building, and the classroom.

The schools belong to all of the people and all of the people should participate to some degree in the formulation of discipline standards. In all the fifty states, they do. Every state code has some provisions for student behavior that have been written into law by the legislative representatives of the people. In addition, the board of education, administrators, teachers, classified personnel, students, and parents should have a voice in formulating the discipline standards. Jack and Jill, particularly, should be called upon for suggestions and given the opportunity to react to tentative rules before they become final. This student participation helps them not only to know the rules and to understand their importance but also to follow them. In the process, it has
been found that student attitudes become more positive toward the need for behavior regulation.

**Discipline Policies for the District**

The authors have found that many school districts have few and fragmentary policies on discipline. On the other hand, some districts have developed handbooks covering student behavior. This latter course is commendable and should be followed in every district in America.

Good examples of district policy can be found in the Garden Grove and Beverly Hills Unified School Districts of California. These districts have developed handbooks which begin with a district point of view, continue with references to the education code, and conclude with board-approved regulations concerning many aspects of student behavior.

Board rules are explicit in these handbooks and include positions on: duties of students, respect for school property, tardiness, vandalism, glue-sniffing, possession of weapons, smoking on campus, vulgarity, use of alcohol, drugs, and narcotics, fireworks, secret organizations, fighting, truancy, vehicles and safety, hazing, behavior on buses, school dress and grooming, respect for fellow students, demonstrations, sit-ins, riots, gambling, and off-campus protection of persons and property. In general, the policies condone behavior that enhances the school program and prohibits activities that interfere with it.

The Anaheim Union High School District recognizes that, "Effective learning cannot prevail without a positive program of control. . . . Instruction is directed toward self-discipline, consistent with the maturity level of the student." The Culver City Unified School District Discipline Handbook says that "Self-discipline is essential to a democracy." The handbook continues by stating, "Discipline exists to make possible a good educational program and to protect the welfare of those who participate in the program."

A school system without discipline policies can be as chaotic as a mob on a football field without rule books or referees. When behavior is appropriate, learning can take place. School boards, administrators, and teachers must displace disaster with discipline.
Discipline Policies for the Building

Each school has unique behavior problems and needs. For this reason, every school should have its own discipline handbook which harmonizes with board adopted regulations and with the state’s education code. The school’s handbook should be formulated cooperatively and made available to all concerned, including parents. It is of utmost importance that all the Jacks and Jills have thorough knowledge of the rules which govern the school society in which they must participate.

The school handbook should be specific in setting up: (1) what is expected of the students; (2) who is involved; and (3) how the system will work. Connected with these three points, students should be taught the importance of proper behavior. They should know why their actions advance or retard the learning program of the school. The cooperation of parents should be sought in all stages of the program.

The discipline handbook should always be positive. Its approach should be to guide students and not to intimidate through dire warnings and punishment. The number of rules and regulations should be kept to a minimum. It should be underscored why these rules and regulations are essential to a productive learning environment.

Some handbooks have the weakness of being prohibitive, not constructive. The best handbook should start with constructive activities that lead to a better intellectual, emotional, physical, and social experience for individuals and groups. The Don’t’s are essential, but they should follow the Do’s. The constructive approach could begin by describing student opportunities for better course scheduling and procedures for obtaining counseling. A section should outline such activities as Girl’s League, “Y” programs, Scout activities, athletic events, club memberships, assemblies, music programs, excursions and field trips, health and safety facilities and procedures, and other student activities.

One school which the authors surveyed offered so many constructive activities that students had little remaining time for loitering or disruption. Even so, this school had its list of the Don’t’s so that every student would be informed about the
taboos. This school was a model of cleanliness and decorum. The administration, the teachers, and the students wanted it that way. Some of the items specifically prohibited were:

Carrying or using weapons or instruments designed to do bodily harm while on or off the school grounds
Possessing and/or igniting explosives or incendiaries of any type on school premises or in any area where school sponsored activities are being held
Drinking, possessing, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages on school premises
Using, furnishing, selling, possessing or being under the influence of any narcotic, hallucinogenic or dangerous drug
Inhaling or breathing the fumes of any stimulating or narcotic substance
Committing an act of defiance, either in language or action, against the teacher
Forging, falsifying, altering, or illegally possessing school forms; or using forged notes or excuses
Possessing or using tobacco on or within one block of the school
Group or individual truancy
Tampering with firefighting equipment or emergency alarm systems
Failure to identify oneself to any school authority
Misconduct in class, library, assembly, halls, or grounds
Violation of the dress regulations
Fighting, profanity, or obscenity
Cheating, stealing, gambling
Illegal driving or parking of vehicles
Willfully defacing or damaging public school property
Excessive tardiness
Leaving campus without a pass

Maintaining the environment for clean, safe, productive schools is everybody's responsibility. When breaches in the behavior code occur, certain officials must go into action, using specified procedures. In one school the teachers and administrators have adopted the following sequence for student correction:

1. One or more conferences between teacher and student. Notification to administrator for information only.
2. Retention of student by teacher after school for conference.
3. Referral to counselor or building administrator for conference and warning.
4. Referral to administrator for conference followed by detention or other corrective measures.
5. Referral to administrator for possible suspension and parent conference. Notification to home-school coordinator.
6. Referral to administrator for suspension of one to ten days, depending upon severity or frequency of misbehavior, and parent conference. Parent must be notified verbally and by letter stating charges.
8. Report to superintendent with supporting personnel present.
9. Request for expulsion to board; copy by registered mail to parent.

Many schools grade their students’ behavior (often called “citizenship”) as well as their academic achievement. One school, which grades students only as “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory,” sets forth certain criteria to help teachers assign appropriate behavior marks.

A student who procure a satisfactory mark in behavior is one who rather consistently:

1. Obey rules, respects public and personal property, and actively promotes the general welfare.
2. Maintains courteous relations with teachers and fellow students and works without disturbing others.
3. Assumes responsibility for having necessary tools and materials and goes to work immediately.
4. Maintains an excellent attendance record by avoiding unnecessary absence or tardiness.
5. Maintains appropriate standards of personal dress and grooming as established by district policy.

A student who gets an unsatisfactory mark in behavior is characterized by the following criteria:

1. Shows disregard for rules, has little respect for public and personal property, and often opposes the general welfare.
2. Disturbs teachers and fellow students by consistent discourtesy and lack of consideration for others.
3. Seldom has the necessary tools and materials and rarely works even with urging.
4. Makes little effort to maintain a satisfactory attendance record; is frequently absent or tardy without excuse.
5. Does not conform to the appropriate standards of personal dress and grooming as established by district policy.

In brief, every school should have a discipline handbook which specifies clearly what should be done, who should do it, and how remedial measures will be applied. The Do's and the Don't's should always be focused toward the enhancement of the educational program.

**Discipline Policies for the Classroom**

More teachers fail because they cannot maintain classroom control than for any other reason. Until classroom order and decorum are established, teaching and learning are minimal. This does not dictate library quietness with no activity, but rather "busy noise" and activities with a purpose. The open-structure classroom is effective because underlying the action is a firm foundation of self-discipline. Discipline in the classroom is the prerequisite to learning. As an example of this fact, consider the following case study:

Peggy Sue Allen was worried about the final Ed Psych exam, when from the corner of her eye she caught an item on the student union bulletin board. It went something like this:

**IF YOU WANT TO TEACH, WHY NOT TEACH IN ______ BEACH**

Then there were color brochures of water skiing, horseback riding, sailing, beaching, Hollywood, winter sports in the mountains, Disneyland, and a happy classroom with happy fifth graders and a happy teacher. Teachers were scarce and jobs plentiful in 1961. Peg signed a contract with the district. All summer, the personnel office sent her weekly communications: district policies, personnel benefits, supply and audio-visual lists, the local weekly newspaper, PTA bulletins, apartment rentals and other community helps for teachers, the Opening of School Bulletin, and a personal letter offering to meet her bus or plane.

Peg glowed with enthusiasm and curiosity, wondered what her
principal would be like, hoped a young engineer from the nearby Lockheed plant would be present at all those attractions pictured on the recruitment brochure, and figured she could get by with a studio apartment until salaries were raised.

When Peg arrived, she was met by a dignitary of the school system, was taken to dinner, given help in finding an apartment close to her assigned school, informed that at last night’s board meeting an added fringe benefit had been voted for teachers, and was told that it was the Rohr plant rather than Lockheed where she might stumble onto an engineer.

The whole Peggy Sue story lacked one hard cold fact—that the little devils in the __________ Beach School System were just as noisy, cunning, and vivacious as they were in her “impossible” student teaching class.

Peg was a new teacher in a strange situation, and a little lonely. She wanted the children to like her, and they did, little angels, at first. The “first,” or Sunday behavior, lasted about three days but grew progressively worse. By the end of the week, it was verging on misbehavior. By the end of the second week, class behavior was nearing a free-for-all; and at the end of the third, it was pandemonium. Peg was panicked.

She started the fourth week with swollen eyes and a plea to the students. What had happened to that sugar plum sailing, mountain barbecues, and the Rohr-ing engineer? Her plea was water over a mallard’s back. But she struggled through until recess. “God, if school were all recess,” she sighed. Then came the stampede back from the playground with shouts, kicks, and flung unidentified objects. One boy dodged behind Miss Allen as a thrown eraser winged her on the starboard cheek. That was it! She threatened to send the whole class to the principal. This threat brought enough calm to Miss Allen’s #203 so that she survived until bus time. Then she, herself, went to the principal’s office. He refused her resignation and offered help. He helped her so well that she stayed and finished out the year, while some of the older teachers accused the principal of favoritism to his face, and of engineer-displacement behind his back.

What went wrong in Miss Allen’s case? Should she have been warned? Told how to start her class? Advised how to maintain behavior? Visited by the principal on the first day, and again in the second week? Should the tenure law be repealed so the old gossipy crones could be fired? Or WHAT?

In the first minute of the first period of the first day, the
teacher must begin by establishing order. Unless she gets class attention, she cannot begin a well-planned lesson or even introduce herself and her Jacks and Jills. When the class comes to order and there is a focus of attention and interest, one of the immediate jobs of the teacher is to establish with her new class some objectives relating to classroom standards. Teachers must never forget, however, that they have final responsibility for the standards. It is their inescapable duty and responsibility to see that student behavior conforms to a standard that makes for maximum classroom learning.

Even though students do not pass final judgment on class standards, their help should be solicited in formulating the rules and in interpreting their application. Making a rule is like making a prayer: it helps the person most who makes it!

Many teachers list classroom standards as part of their teaching objectives on their first day and feel that the job is done for the semester or year. Thorndike found that most forgetting takes place during the first 24 hours. Jack and Jill may neither understand nor remember. Wise teachers will not expect their students to remember all the classroom standards but will set them forth in writing so that each student has a copy. Such a list should not become the law of the Medes and Persians but should be subject to revision and updating. Even though the list does not need updating, students need review and reinforcing in order to remember the rules and how they are to be applied. Such reinforcement should continue during the school term.

The wise teacher usually develops the classroom standards by cooperative planning and brainstorming with the class. The class which formulates standards follows them. Or the teacher may hand out a mimeographed list, or may have it copied on the blackboard. A suggestive list tends to save time and may be helpful to immature students. In primary classes, the teacher often needs to suggest the rules. At the senior high level, the teacher has to help, and in some cases, has to veto class suggestions if they violate building, district, or state regulations. In all cases, the teacher must be the responsible leader and the final authority.

The following list of Do's and Don't's will help the teacher maintain her place as the final judge in matters of classroom control:
DO:
1. Know district and school policies and follow them closely.
2. Develop written classroom standards and supply the reasons for them.
3. Explain “why” when you have to deny students’ requests.
4. Point out the consequences of poor student behavior. Follow through.
5. Expect students to behave well and praise students for their good behavior.
6. Separate students who behave poorly toward each other.
7. Have well-planned, motivating, and meaningful lessons and teach in an interesting and enthusiastic manner.
8. Ask for help from the principal and counselors in setting and enforcing classroom standards if you need it.
9. Keep accurate anecdotal records on each student’s behavior.
10. Permit students to grow toward independence and self-discipline.
11. Remember you are the adult. Children want a teacher-leader, not another class pal.
12. Acknowledge desirable behavior and good work. Reward students in a variety of ways.
13. Seek help from parents.

DON’T:
1. Make too many rules, talk too much, or shout at pupils.
2. Try to treat severe emotional problems yourself or get personally involved with your students.
3. Make promises or threats that you may not be able to keep.
4. Show favoritism or tolerate begging for special privileges.
5. Reward undesirable behavior or slip-shod work.
6. Say “no” habitually, or before all the evidence is in.
7. Apply rules to all children arbitrarily, but watch for individual and unique differences.
8. Use the principal’s office or the home as a discipline dumping-ground.

Teachers should use the list of Do’s and Don’t’s as a beginning. They should adapt, add, delete, and revise to suit their own local conditions.

In summary, school administrators and teachers should make it their business to establish, maintain in writing, and follow discipline policies. These policies should be written for the district, the building level, and the classroom.
CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE—
OR DISASTER FOR THE TEACHER

"Teaching would be wonderful if it were not for the kids." "A teacher is a nervous breakdown waiting to happen." "Look to your insurance and demand a second exit in your classroom." These expressions which teachers use jokingly all imply that student behavior is a king-size problem. Fenton’s Mental Hygiene in School Practice points to discipline as one of the strong factors in teacher tension and maladjustment.

Teachers, especially beginning teachers, need all the help they can get in establishing and maintaining order. One educator tells the story of a young Columbia University Teachers College graduate who some years ago took his diploma and a suitcase full of doubts to his first assignment in the Arizona Territory. At 9:00 a.m. on the first day, he rang the hand bell and watched a mongrel pack of urchins, grades 1-8, scuffle into creaky seats with broken desks. At the back of the room scrambled in a half-dozen cowhands, town bullies, and country rounders, fresh out of the Cowhide and Cactus Saloon. The trembling rookie "Prof" hid his shakes, strolled to the window, tossed out a brick from the ledge, pulled a .38 from his shoulder holster, and fired six careening, ricocheting bullets which whined off the brick and into the desert sage. As he blew the smoke from the business end of his "audio-visual aid," he turned and said to the class: "School is in session!" And it was.

Modern teachers have to think of more modern techniques for maintaining control in their classrooms. Lacking Arizona territory
equipment and the right to use it, they have to rummage through such books as this one, hoping to find some ammunition.

The authors have combed the practices of many schools in several states to compile a variety of recommendations. The following tips for classroom control and suggestions for handling problem students have merit, but they should be adapted to the area, time, and type of class.

Some General Tips on Classroom Control

Teachers should create the greatest possible learning situation for Jack and Jill and maintain proper classroom control to make it possible. Try these techniques. Revise as needed:

1. Be in the room ahead of time and start the class promptly.
2. Utilize the tendencies of students to behave well in a new environment. Set standards and limits the first day. Let the students help. Put the standards in writing.
3. Learn and use students’ names as soon as possible. Pronounce them correctly.
4. Be PREPARED! Teacher preparation is critical.
5. Be CONSISTENT! Never discipline one time and ignore the next. Never nod to a pet with a special privilege.
6. Make assignments appropriate for students. Recognize individual differences and vary the kind and amount of assignment to keep everyone working to his capacity. Free time finds pranks for idle hands to do.
7. Employ the three F’s: Friendly, Fair, and Firm.
8. At the end of a week or two, review the classroom standards. Have Jack and Jill keep them updated in their notebooks.
9. Maintain a reserve. Never expose your whole hand. Do not paint yourself into a verbal corner with too many threats or promises. Learn from the example of the solid, unexposed portion of the iceberg.
10. Use surprise—an interesting film, an outside speaker, a new song, a change in classroom routine. Students, as adults, like variety that leads to pleasant experiences.
11. Make your classroom a place where students practice the kind of behavior that leads to greatest learning. It need not be a mausoleum nor an armageddon.
12. Know what you should do next. Show students that you are “organized.” Jack and Jill sense immediately when you are bluffing.
13. When challenged by a student, do not take it personally. Consult your classroom and building standards and follow them impartially.

14. Evaluate the effectiveness of your standards. Let your students help. Talk it over with your principal.

15. Read about discipline in your association magazines, in books like Classroom Discipline or Discipline Newsletter (The Economics Press) at your library or college.

16. Speak with a low, well-modulated voice. Pause and wait if necessary for attention and quiet. Do not try to shout over the noise—it will get worse.

17. Ask a misbehaving child a direct question. Look him straight in the eye. Follow with another question if necessary.

18. Be your strictest at the beginning of the term. You can always loosen up on Jack and Jill, but tightening up is not so easy.

19. Praise Jack and Jill before the class. Reprimand in private if you must.

20. If the whole class gets fidgety and squirmy, try some standing, stretching, action games. Keep a healthful, comfortable room environment.

21. Confer often with parents. Keep them as partners. You will need them in every “classroom shootout.”

22. See that each child experiences success.

Problem Types and Problem Situations

If only discipline problems were all the same and had pat answers! But they are not, and they do not. A few problem types follow, along with suggestions for handling. Each type will need some adapting by the problem-ridden teacher.

Students who refuse to do schoolwork. Students who refuse to do schoolwork are most frustrating and annoying to teachers. Unless the problem is resolved it will mushroom and have a negative effect on the progress of other students and their attitude about schoolwork. Try these techniques:

1. Students should not be allowed to refuse to do assignments. Obviously there is a reason for this type of behavior. Speak with the student in private to find out why he will not do his assignments. Check his file. Confer with counselor, principal, and parent.

2. Be sure that the assignments are reasonable and that the
student can do the work. Settle for nothing less than honest student performance.

3. Allow the student an opportunity to complete the unfinished assignments within a reasonable time period.

**Students who take others’ property.** From time to time, items, most commonly money, will be taken from a student’s or teacher’s desk. Seldom will a child who has stolen an item be honest about his deed. Lack of honesty among children is not unusual, but the time spent correcting it is always worthwhile. Try these techniques:

1. Avoid the occasion for thefts by keeping a constant watch over your classroom. Students should NEVER be allowed in a classroom alone without proper teacher supervision.

2. Getting a child to admit to stealing is a most difficult task for teachers. Try to get a student to admit stealing by showing evidences of his doing it.

3. If he refuses to stop stealing or if he has stolen a valuable item, notify the principal and his parents.

4. Many times a child who resorts to stealing is seen by other members of the class, either stealing or with the stolen articles in his possession. Hard evidence is the best means to a confession.

5. Since there is a little dishonesty in everyone, make it your business to teach attitudes of honesty to all of your students. Work with the offending student to build a better self image: an image of veracity, truthfulness, and dependability.

**Students who do schoolwork dishonestly.** A student who does his schoolwork dishonestly has not only developed a poor habit, but he misses learning opportunities. If he gets away with cheating, others may try the same thing. Try these techniques:

1. Look for signs of cheating. When a student is caught, indicate that you will not accept schoolwork accomplished by cheating.

2. Remove as many temptations as possible for cheating in your classroom.

3. If a student cheats because he feels he cannot do work well by doing it honestly, help him realize that he is cheating himself and that you will accept the work which he does honestly. If he denies that he cheats, try to show him evidence of your observations of his cheating.
4. If the cheating persists, contact the student’s parents for a conference. Include the student in the conference. Share your observations and evidence of cheating. Check for excessive home pressure or unrealistic expectations.

5. Make classroom rewards higher for honest work than for “cribbed” papers.

**Students who are restless and fidgety.** Fidgety behavior in the classroom interferes with a student’s school work as well as annoys others. Most often this restlessness is due to a child’s being nervous, tired, or not having enough schoolwork to do in the classroom. Try these techniques:

1. Review the student’s “cum” folder for tips on why he behaves this way. A conference with his parents might shed some light.

2. If you find the cause, remove or relieve it by suggesting to parents that he have more sleep or refer him to the school nurse or counselor. He might have some physical disability affecting his vision or hearing which causes his behavior.

3. This is a good place to be flexible. Recognize that some children are physically incapable of sitting still and need opportunities to move about. Plan built-in changes of pace.

**Students who are hostile.** Most classrooms have at least one student who has a short temper or who expresses hostility. He most often blames others for the way he feels. Try these techniques:

1. Seat the student near those with whom he gets along and as far away from “enemies” as possible.

2. Give him a chance to “cool off” before trying to find out causes for fights or arguments. A softer, calmer child will be much more receptive to reason. Do not argue with him.

3. Speak with the child in private. Explain that it is human for people to be angry. If he blames others, try to reason with him.

4. Consult his parents. Indicate your observations of anger and fighting and the consequences it is having on his personality, schoolwork, and the attitudes of others toward him.


**Students who are “noisy.”** This discipline problem is one of
the most frequent causes of poor classroom control. Try these techniques:

1. Make certain an adequate amount of work is assigned to students. Extra work which is of interest to students should be made available for those who complete assignments early.

2. Stop unwanted noise as soon as it starts. Children will not get quiet on their own.

3. Separate the most talkative.

4. Provide opportunities for students to express their need for talking in social science committee work, choral reading, music, and art.

5. Avoid speaking in a loud voice. Students tend to be “loud” if you are. Speak in a moderate or low voice and expect students to do the same.

**Students who are mischievous.** This type of student is often the most difficult to correct. His actions are difficult to identify precisely. His individual pranks are not excessive; however, taken collectively, they constitute a discipline problem. He is very capable of justifying his actions and many times it is difficult to “pin” anything on him. Try these techniques:

1. Instead of accepting his excuses for mischievous acts, have him accept the consequences for them.

2. Try to convince him that it is not necessary to act in tricky ways to gain acceptance in the classroom.

3. Seat this student in a place where he can be observed by you constantly.

4. Provide opportunities for him to attract attention in acceptable ways and reward him for desirable behavior. Show this student that you accept the attention he attracts when doing good schoolwork, participating in sports, cooperating in groups, or being helpful in the classroom.

**Working with Parents**

Care should be exercised in meeting with parents and offering suggestions for improving behavior. Try these techniques:

1. Follow policies adopted by the school district and by the school.

2. Do not tell parents what to do, but indicate that this or that has worked for you as a teacher.
3. Do not suggest that the parents seek outside help. If the principal feels this is necessary, let him suggest it.

4. Ask questions. Let the parents talk freely.

5. Try to give a reason for each suggestion. Do not offer too many.

6. Emphasize that you have a sincere interest in helping their child. Find something you can praise!
HOW TO AVERT DISASTER

Classroom standards are as essential as the referee's rule book. So are the standards for the playground, cafeteria, and lavatory. Either standards may be unwritten and poorly understood, or they may be clearly defined and memorized by the students. The initial rules are a time and a place for school and the class. It is not a question of rules or no rules. The question is what rules, how many, and their application. The character and success of a class will be determined in large part by its operating standards. As the rules must fit the time, place, curriculum, teacher, and students, the standards must be tailor-made to the situation.

But some class and school rules are more basic and general than others. Classroom rules in Florida and Illinois may vary with respect to Jack's tracking snow into the classroom and may agree on swearing at the teacher. As a summary for what has been said before and as an originating point for teachers to devise their own classroom standards, the authors have compiled (1) a list of criteria for the making of classroom standards, (2) a sample list of basic classroom standards, and (3) a suggested list of standards for the playground.

Criteria for Establishing Classroom Standards

Some rules govern the making of rules. The following criteria pertaining to classroom standards are helpful:

1. Involve students in listing and discussing some basic behavior
standards, explaining and discussing why they apply equally to all
and why they should be observed.
2. Early in the year spend a short time daily on each important
standard.
3. Reserve a small portion of a front blackboard for a written
standard which is highlighted and discussed.
4. Keep a list of standards and rules for reference, recognizing
that a long and detailed list is of less value than a short list of well-
selected items.
5. Assign a reliable student to help a new class member learn
the standards of the school and classroom.
6. Without personal references and without emotionalized con-
cern, use occasional behavior episodes to help students analyze
and understand the reasons for having and for observing standards
of conduct.

**Sample Classroom Standards**

The following two sets of classroom standards have been de-
veloped and adapted from lists prepared by teachers and their stu-
dents. The differences between the ninth and first grade students,
as represented by the standards, show a marked growth in ma-
turity and self-control during these years.

**Sample Room Standards, Ninth Grade**

1. Have books, paper, and pencil ready. Begin work immedi-
ately.
2. Participate and help in class planning.
3. Maintain an atmosphere that helps everyone to study.
4. Contribute to the class and help fellow students.
5. Always do your own assignments—never "crib" from others.
6. Get all work in on time and in acceptable form.
7. Help keep the room clean, neat, and orderly.
8. Keep an individual progress record and try to keep improv-
ing it.
9. Never bring gum, toys, animals (except on assignment), or
other distracting materials into the classroom.
10. Take pride in clean speech, appropriate dress, and courteous
manners.
11. Protect desks, books, and other school supplies and equip-
ment.
Sample Room Standards, First Grade

(Standards for First Graders must be fewer and simpler.)
1. We are in our seats when the bell rings.
2. We listen to the teacher.
3. We do our own work.
4. We do not mark on desks.
5. We are quiet so everyone can hear.
6. We take turns. We help each other.

Sample Standards for the Playground

Jack and Jill can hurry out to a disciplined recess or to a disastrous brawl. If the recess is to be ordered and enjoyable, there must be "playground rules," just as there must be rules and standards for the cafeteria and lavatory.

Some basic suggestions follow that can be adapted by local teachers and administrators:

Sample Playground Standards

1. Walk to and from the playground area.
2. Hold balls, bats, and other equipment until you are in the game area. Random tossing is dangerous to others.
3. Take an active part, but do not chase through game areas.
4. When a ball goes outside the playground, get permission from a supervisor to get it. Never chase a ball into the alley or street.
5. Know and follow each game's rules. Do not quarrel with playmates about an "out." Ask the playground supervisor.
6. On slides, horizontal bar, monkey rings, and swings, only one student at a time. Follow playground supervisor's directions.
7. No kicking of balls other than the kickball.
8. Upper grade students must not run across the yellow line into the primary area.
9. When the playground supervisor blows the whistle twice, "freeze" until you receive the "at ease" signal.
10. At the ringing of the first bell, all balls and equipment are to be given to the monitors who will return them to the bins and shelves. At the ringing of the second bell, proceed to your classroom.
11. The playgrounds are open to students 8:30-8:50 a.m., at recess, at noon, and 2:30-2:45 p.m. (Special time for Primary.)
Standards and rules should be established for all other areas and functions. The standards should inform students concerning expected behavior at assemblies, athletic contests, in the offices, on the way to and from school, and at flag raising. How can Jack and Jill know the best thing to do if the subject is hush-hush? Sensible rules reasonably applied make the difference between order and anarchy—between discipline and disaster! Good behavior in schools is made to happen. Poor behavior is allowed to happen.

From the days of Adam to Uncle Sam, every Jack and Jill has had to learn self-discipline. In the process, parents, teachers, counselors, and administrators have had to impose home and school standards as learning devices. The increasingly crowded and complex schools require more and more game rules. It is hoped that EDUCATORS will have the wisdom to make enough (but not too many) of the right kind of standards. If they do, the future Jacks and Jills can look forward to a life of disciplined fulfillment instead of disaster and futility.
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