

How I Am Managing Student Behavior In Class



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Forward: What is Discipline

Before I get started you need to know what I understand as discipline.

I am not one who believes that discipline means that all my students should be silence in the class, doing nothing without my approval and every student responding to my every instruction with “Yes Sensei”. In fact there are and have been parents that have come into my classes and described it as controlled chaos.

I take such comment as a complements. I have worked as a leader of children since I was a teenager for over 45 year. I am a farther of 4 boys and at the last count 7 grand children. I have learned many lessons but one of the most important was to Pick my battles. In fact I have had parents come to me and ask why I have no trouble with their children and they do, to which I reply I don't find a lot of the things they fight with their children over to be important.

I used to think that discipline means control but it does not, it means management. It means being an example and most of all it means never breaking another persons spirit, be it a child or adult and allowing children to be children.

I have lost students because I was not strict enough and I have lost others because I was uncompromising on my principals. I am very sad that I lost them but I make no apologies.

I am convinced that the best discipline is self discipline and children cannot do that in a rigidly controlled environment. But they also have to feel safe and that means rules that do just that and someone who cares enough about them (the children) to want to guide them so they will succeed.

Discipline is not an exact science; my sons will testify to that. I have learned over the years that there are always better ways to do things. Hence, I do not consider this document, even with all the experience behind it, to be the final word in discipline but I do hope it is helpful.

There are two main principals that drive my approach to discipline in my Judo club.

Principle 1: Confidence

Principle 2: Integrity

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Confidence

I love the movie Kindergarten Cop. The advice given to John Kimble (played by Arnold Schwarzenegger) of “Have no fear” just epitomizes working with children to me.

I used to lead children’s camps and on one such camp one of my junior leaders asked me: “why do the children do what you ask them to and I can’t get them to do a thing”?

I replied by saying: “it’s because you don’t expect them to do what you ask them to and I do”.

Of course it’s not quite that simple but within that one statement is the basis for all failure to manage kids. If you don’t believe in yourself then they won’t and no amount of techniques or training will change that.

Integrity

In Martial Arts we are always talking about integrity or we should be, but how often do we apply it in the discipline of children.

I am also a [swim teacher](#) and the most important factor when teaching children to swim, after believing in yourself, is trust.

When asked by new swim teachers what is the best piece of advice I can give, I always say: “Say what you will do and do what you said you were going to do”.

The trust of a child is very powerful but it is also very fickle. If I say I am not going to put you under the water and then I put you under the water because of some misguided belief that I am helping you get used to going under water, I am done as that child’s swim teacher. They are most likely never going to let me near them again.

The same is true of Martial Arts. If I say “I’m not going to throw you” and then I throw you, regardless of my good intention, I have given away trust. Lose trust even if you don’t lose the student, significantly reduced your chances of getting them to do what you ask, when, how and where you want them to.

Don’t get me wrong cheating is fun sometimes, as is anything unpredictable but be sure that your students know you well before you do anything like that. They must know you will always operate within very clear limits of what is genuine fun; never do anything with malaise, significant disadvantage, dishonor or disrespect to your students.

Integrity incorporates respect. But that is a whole other article. Suffice to say that if you don’t have the respect of those around you and you don’t show respect, you have no chance of controlling a class. Remember respect is earned it is not divinely bestowed.

Once you have these principals in place, all you need then are the tools

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Tools for Managing Student Misbehavior

Be Available, Listen, Believe, Act If Necessary

You are a very special person in your students life. Don't betray that! If you are always talking or helping someone else; if you only ever tell them what to do and not hear what they have to say; if you accuse them of being a telltale when they complain about others actions and you never act on anything they say, then forget it, you can never discipline that child.

Where there is no respect there is no discipline.

Be available, listen, believe, act if necessary: this is the beginning of all relationships and relationships are what good discipline is built on.

Respect Is Earned Not Divinely Bestowed.

Respect Of Your Leaders

The Golden Rule will never be outmoded and should never be overruled. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is the ultimate expression of respect (The Good News Translation of the Bible puts it "Do for others just what you want them to do for you." Luke 6:31). The quickest way to lose the respect of your leaders is to ask them to do something or behave in a way that you would not be willing to, should you be in their shoes.

I say in their shoes because if I respect them I will try to understand where they are coming from. Trying to see things their way will reduce the risk of misunderstanding.

If my students see me disrespecting my leaders I have no hope of managing misbehavior. More than that if my leaders respect me, that will show. Respected leaders will always follow instructions much more readily than disrespected ones; if for no other reason than they will be confident because they know that you have their back.

Let me try to give you an example:

I was working at a center at which I was given increasingly more and more responsibility. You would think this would be a good thing except it was not because it only increased my workload for no additional reward and proportionately decreased the workload of the person doing the delegating, so that they did less and less. It was clear that the reason I was being given that responsibility was because the person allocating it was unwilling to do it themselves. Instead of improving the running of the organization all it did was breed resentment.

The lesson is that the only time you delegate your work is to make the running of things more efficient, not so that you can be lazy. That is, if doing something yourself makes things less efficient pass it on, otherwise do it yourself.

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Respect Of Your Students And Leaders Enough To Say Sorry

Sooner or latter you will mess up: you have to be courageous and confident enough to be willing to say sorry. I am not the perfect leader, no one is; despite the impression the media gives. I have learned that it is a strange rule of life and leadership, that you will: learn more, make less mistakes and people will follow your instructions more readily, if you allow yourself to be vulnerable. When you make mistakes, say sorry and move on.

Do Not Disrespect Your Students, Leader or Helpers

I make every endeavor not to discipline a student, leader or helpers in front of others, particularly other students. Unless what they are doing is dangerous and needs to be stopped before someone gets hurt, always try and take a child who has committed a significant offense aside or have a quiet word in their ear, rather than speak to them in front of everyone.

Having said that, there are times when embarrassing a student was the only thing left to try to bring them back into line. But this is a very last resort because if it doesn't work and it usually doesn't, there is a pretty good chance that the student will not come back.

Honestly, if you have reached the point of needing to embarrass a student, you would have to see something in this student really worth fighting for, otherwise you are much better off asking them to leave than doing this. Multiple uses of this technique will only build resentment or the student may end up basking in the lime light and in both cases the tool backfires on you.

Respect For And Of Parents

Parents are critical to the survival of most organizations that involve children. You have to keep them on side, however that does not mean that they should supplant your role of leadership when you are teaching.

As far as possible I never contradict a parents beliefs or culture but I am not limited by them either. I always listen to what a parent has to say and apply it as far as I can but at the same time I let every parent know that I will not put aside my own beliefs and culture unless I can be shown that there is good reason to do so.

If I can accommodate a request from a parent I will but if I can't then I politely explain that I cannot. For example:

I had three Muslim children join my Judo club and they came to me after class one time and asked if they could avoid the kneeling bow at the start of class because it made them uncomfortable as it was so close to what they do in prayer time. This was easy to solve, we just did standing bows in the club and everybody was happy.

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In contrast: when I ran before and after school care programs, I was “given permission” by a parent to smack their child if he misbehaved. Such discipline would have ended me up in jail so I politely explained to the parent that whilst I greatly appreciated the trust they were putting in me with this action, I could not accommodate such a request and told them why.

Talk to parents about discipline sparingly don't be a tattletale. I don't discuss the misbehavior of students in class unless I need advice. What happens in class should as far as possible stay in class otherwise children will lose respect for you.

Unfortunately not all requests are so straight forward and I have had to do some serious thinking as to how or if I can accommodate them if at all. The important point is to keep the parent involved and never disregard what they say or ask of you.

Medical Issues And Parents

Other times I have had to deal with medical issues and this is where parents come into their own as they are your best source of knowledge. I talk all my parents about what works and what doesn't.

For example: Autism, ADD, ADHD, Epilepsy, vision issues, etc. none of these things stop a child from participating but you do need to know. All my students fill in medical information forms as part of their joining. I discourage complete medical histories but make sure parents tell me what I need to know. That way I can talk to them as needed about the best management skills; both medical and discipline.

I have said above:

“Talk to parents about discipline sparingly don't be a tattletale. I don't discuss the misbehavior of students in class unless I need advice. What happens in class should as far as possible stay in class otherwise children will lose respect for you.”

This is particularly true when dealing with children who have medical issues. Both parent and child are almost certainly over burdened with everybody giving them advice on how to deal with whatever the condition is. I don't need to compound that. I am never afraid to ask for advice but if a situation was dealt with in class that should be the end of it. If they ask me I'll tell them whatever they want to know but I don't volunteer information unless I need advice.

The sort of advice I ask is what skills the child is working on at the moment and how the professionals are working on them. I do not ask what are the things the child cannot do. Always ask in the positive never in the negative.

Also I will always take note what parents tell me about the limitation of a child. Such things are important to be aware of. But I will not stop a child from going beyond those limitations unless there is good medical reason. However I will never do this in the blind; I will always keep the parents informed.

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For example: I have had a child in my class with brain damage. It affects his motor skills on the right side. I ended up with the privilege of helping him develop that side. Otherwise he is a normal child and I teach as such. As I do with all children with medical issues. I expect him to try everything but because I am armed with the correct medical information from the parent I can be patient with him if he doesn't succeed.

I am always very proud when parents come to me after I have finished a round of classes and tell me how please they are at their child's progress and how surprised they are at how much progress they have made. Including those that have medical issues. This is all because I do not have expectations about a child's limitations and teach them as I would any other child except with with a bit more patience.

Open Classes

I have open classes; parents can come and go as they please. Doing so opens the doors to trust as nothing else does. Not only does it make the parents feel more confident but it improves behaviour because the children know they are being watched. It also means that new insecure children need never be far away from a familiar face.

A big spin off from open classes is it also protects me from any chance of being accused of misconduct. This is so even though by far and away most parents leave during class after a few weeks, to do other things.

I took one of my own sons to a Karate class one time; as he expressed an interest. I discovered I was not allowed to remain in the class whilst the lessons were on. I was told this was because it gave the young people confidence that this was their class.

I removed my child from the class. Such secret societies do not belong in today's world.

A common objection to open classes is: but what if a child has issues at home? Experience tells me that you can be assured that any child that trusts you will soon find a way to reveal such issues. You don't need clandestine meetings to find such things out. You only need the child's trust.

The down side of open classes is parents coaching from the side of the mat. I don't let them take control of my class from the side of the mat. I don't know why other organizations do. A simple polite word in the ear of the parent after class will usually resolve this. I explain that such actions affects class management. Better still, if they seem to know what they are talking about I get them to be an assistant leader. I invite them on the mat to help. I can always use help.

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The Use Of Titles And Respect

Let me finish this very long section on parents with a personal rule. I never get upset with a student using my first name and in fact off the mat I encourage it. And whilst on the mat I encourage the use of the term Sensei I never correct a student who uses my first name. There are many who say that to use the first name of the teacher breeds disrespect, whereas the use of a title such as sir or Sensei encourages it. This is nonsense.

I once asked my nieces why they insisted on calling me “uncle” when I had given them permission to call me Richard. They said that it was because they respected me.

Having said that, if a parent insists that a child calls me “Mr” or “Sensei” I never correct that either. Parents should be given respect enough to be allowed to teach their child the attitudes and cultural forms that they believe is right for them. I don't have to subjugate my own values to let them do it.

“Respect is Earned Not Divinely Bestowed!” - Richard Roper

Respect Of Parents Conclusion

Parents are my biggest asset for everything in my Judo club not just class management. Keeping them on side will not only give you a wonderful resource but it is absolutely necessary.

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Practical application

It's all very well to talk philosophically as I have above but you also need practical how to so that is what I have done in this next section. The following are a set of ideas that I have used successfully over the years to manage my classes. I hope you find them helpful.

“Matte” - Seriously Enforced Safety Stop Words

Getting your students to respond to you and stop work instantly is always a challenge. Try to get them use to responding instantly by playing the games:

- Dead Fish
- Statues

If you don't know these games look them up on the internet.

Play the games and then substitute you Martial Arts stop word (ie. in Judo that is Matte) for dead fish or statues (ie. call Matte instead of dead fish or statues). Do this on regular occasions so that new students get used to the instant response.

Make The Punishment Fit The Crime

Push-ups for punishment is just silly. In Judo we want the children to develop strong healthy bodies push-ups may be a part of that regime. I don't make them a negative exercise.

For instance when children are practicing I don't want them resisting their partners actions because it hinders the practice. I will often throw a resistant children, always keeping them safe and making sure they don't get hurt of course. The children often volunteer for this punishment they enjoy it so much but it does get the point across and they usually stop resisting their partner.

Telling Parents

There is a big difference between consulting with or seeking the advice of parents and using them as a threat. Threatening to tell a child's parents under any circumstance except potential expulsion is always a bad move. I may seek parental advice but I try never to threaten a child with telling on them. To do so would be to undermine my own authority and make the parents out to be the bad guys; I'm in charge not their parents. Yes I am *in loco parentis* but that should increase my authority not decrease it by constantly deferring to the child's parents.

Time Out Must Be Limited

If they are enjoying what they are doing then time out from that enjoyment is usually sufficient punishment. I just make sure that the amount of time out is appropriate to the crime. Sending them off for an hour for a minor infringement like talking when they should have been practicing is over kill and may build resentment. I will only send children off if their misbehavior is persistent and then only a few minutes is usually more than enough.

The more a child enjoys an activity the more a child will be affected if I withdraw it. The extent of the misbehavior determines how much fun I remove.

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Temperature (Hot Or Cold) May Affect Behaviour

Fact: If it is too hot or too cold behaviour will be affected.

Too Cold

As a swim teacher I know that you will get better behaviour out of a child that is warm. The solution in the water is that if I think a child is misbehaving because they are cold I will talk the parent into getting a wet suit for them.

A wet suit on the Judo mat is not a good idea but there is still no doubt that if a child is cold their behaviour can be less than desirable.

If I am working at a training center where I can't warm it sufficiently, I let my students wear added clothing under their uniform. If it safe, I sometimes even allow socks until they warm up.

In most instances the students are happy to remove these hindrances once they are warm. Even then, there are times when I need them to sit and listen to me so I am happy for them to put the added gear on whilst they are sitting. Though it has to be said that such centers are rare these days. I usually just turn the heat up.

Besides, as every coach knows, warming up before training reduces the risk of injury.

Too Hot

On the other hand being too hot is also a problem. Many training centers do not have air conditioning. I solve this situation differently:

You can get very cheap spray bottles, fill them with water and every now and then have spray fights. The Kids think this is fantastic.

Some Safety rules:

- The bottles must be on spray (wide fine dispersion of the water)
- Don't let them spray into other students eyes. In fact never spray less than 2 arms lengths from the face.
- Never let the students take the spray bottle off mist.
- Don't let them spray too much or more than a minute. The floor gets wet and slippery
- Don't let them drink from the bottles; it's just gross.

Keep Them Moving

Bored kids are misbehaving kids. In my view it doesn't matter how much detail you think you need to give in a description, or how much practice you think a child might need, it can always be broken up into smaller bites.

Even though I question that children were ever able to sit for more than a few minutes at a time, there is no question that now we have educated our children to only pay attention for very short amounts of time. So Keep it short; Keep it moving and Keep changing it. Particularly on cold days.

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Games

If you are not playing games you are missing perfect education opportunities. Use as a tool to teach they are a fantastic medium. It is the perfect way to keep them moving. There are plenty of games books and videos around that are intended as teaching tools.

Even if you cannot find any relevant games and you can't invent some (something I struggle to think possible), then any game is the perfect reward systems and sometimes punishment.

Games are fun and if it is fun then discipline is much easier to maintain.

Games As Reward

If you use games as a reward systems, it must be used for within a short period of time. It must not become a “Daddy will play with you when he get home” type event. That is, I never play a game more than 10 – 15 minutes from the time I promised it or it loses effectiveness and I lose credibility because they don't believe me.

Games Punishment

If you use it as a punishment a minimal time delay is critical. It must not become a “wait till you father gets home” punishment. I never say to my students that there will be no game if you don't get this finished unless I genuinely intend to do the game at the end of the exercise. A game that is at the end of class it is too far away for them to care.

It would have to be a really bad act for me to punish with by taking away a game because the games in themselves help manage the class as it keeps them moving.

Games As An Attention Getting Tool

One of the best ways I have found to use games is in getting children's attention. There is little that will grab a child's attention faster than to say “There is a game after {the activity} and the longer it takes for me to explain it the longer it takes to get to the game and the less time you will have for it. In fact it is even better if they already know the game is following because then all you then need to say is: “you are wasting your own time” when they are not doing what you need them to.

Games As Bribery

Bribery works if it is done well and games are a great bribe.

Just as an aside people don't like it when you call it bribery; they prefer the term contracting or some other word. Personally I've never been able to work out the difference but what ever term you use using games as a reward is very effective.

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Tell Stories To Make A Point Or Teach A Lesson

If you have to have them sit to pass on information, telling stories is a phenomenal communication method and the kids take the information on board very easily. To the point now that it is not unusual to have parents come to me after class and ask me to deal with a particular topic in my stories or meditation time.

Just be careful if you love to talk or tell stories because the kids will figure that out and use it to get you talking and telling your stories rather than working. Mind you I can't help but find that often more endearing than misbehaving but you do have to be careful of it. I have made it a practice to get one of my co instructor to say "Not Judo" when I get too sidetracked.

Never Just Threaten

I learned a long time ago to never tell a child I am going to punish them by doing such and such if I don't intend to carry it out.

If you would not ever really carry something out, don't say you will. You just look stupid.

Only Give One Warning Or Even Give No Warning

I never give more than one warning and if the child knows the rules I don't even give a warning. More than one warning breeds contempt in my opinion.

Voice

Vary your voice:

I Save YELLING for dangerous or urgent or last resort type situations

Whispering: I do this as soon as I gather the children together because if you wait they will start to get their own conversations going and they wont hear you.

Alternatively I whisper an instruction to one student at a time

Not speaking: As a lifeguard at the local swimming pool, I have become very adept at directing people with my eyes, a nod of my head or a motion of my hand. This comes in very handy at judo. The students have to be confident that you will follow this up with something stronger if they don't comply however.

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Praise Good Behavior Rather Than Pointing Out Bad

Since attention is often the purpose of bad behaviour it's surprising how quickly many of my misbehaving students will come into line once they realize that different behaviour is getting my attention. Of course you have to be disciplined to redirect your attention and you can't ignore unsafe behaviour let alone make someone a teachers pet.

All the above can be done very simply by praising good behavior rather than pointing out bad.

There is a philosophy that argues that we praise our kids too much. It argues that in the "real world" we only get praised for outstanding effort. Even if this is true there is never any problem with parsing a child for something that they have achieved that they haven't achieved before, even if they achieve it poorly.

Deal With Behaviour Not The Student

I Do Not allow my frustration to boil over and start Labeling my students; or worse still call them names. I have always named the issue i.e. "What you did was dangerous", "That {name the action} was stupid", "Your misbehavior has landed you into trouble".

By doing this I have always been able to come back to any student that challenges me on any comment I have made to them by saying: "I called your behaviour '....,' I never said you were '...'. You are not'...' and I hope you will never be '...'".

Fix The Problem Not The Blame

Dealing with students well, will and should never be easy. If you think it is you are just not building good relationships. I work very hard at not letting my focus on a problem drift onto the student. Because a student is having problems with something I ask them to do, does not mean they not trying. Nor does it mean that they are a bad student. It's possible that it's not the student at all.

It may be I am not communicating in a way they can grasp what I am saying. I am always prepared to change the way I communicate (my words, my phrases, my movements) before blaming the student. I ask if they have any questions and I avoid being dismissive of their questions. Be aware that some students learn kinetically, some visually, some audiological. Be prepared to change to what works best.

In other words make sure it is actual misbehavior, not just a child struggling.

Make Sure The Student Is The Right Fit For The Class

This is not just good class management but good skill and personal development. There are few more difficult students to manage than a bored student or one that is struggling to keep up.

This is easy to fix if you have multiple classes at different levels. All you have to do is move the student around until you find a class that they fit into.

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Example 1: you may have a class that is smaller than the others and it may be good to move a child into that class just because they will get more attention.

Example 2: your difficulties may be because there is not a big enough challenge. Always taking into consideration the safety factors, try putting the challenging student into the advanced class. Even if they are not of the right age or advanced enough it may be worth the move. If they can't cope that is not necessarily a bad thing as you can put them back in their original class with a challenge that if they can now aim to get better so they can return to the advanced class as soon as they are ready.

However some of us don't have multiple classes. So we have to try other options. Most clubs would however have a senior class so one of the things that I have done is to invite my bored juniors to join the seniors. There is a great deal more taught in a senior class, or at least there should be and as long as the seniors are aware that they are dealing with a junior they are usually very considerate.

I make it a practice as a matter of course, to invite all my juniors to attend the senior class once they reach the age of 12 anyway so it is not a big stretch to invite other juniors as appropriate.

If going to the senior class is not an option then the other possibility is to get the difficult student to teach a fellow student or perhaps even a group or even a whole class occasionally. Giving a student more responsibility is often just as good as giving them more challenging things to do.

Keep Fighting Sibling Apart

A word to the wise however: considerable experience tells me that, in most cases it is a very bad idea to put two siblings together at all let alone with one teaching the other. Such an arrangement is usually a recipe for building resentment.

There are exceptions to sibling not working together and you will know those almost as soon as those students join the club. This is because they will already visibly have this teacher/protector relationship. Even then because they have such a relationship does not mean it is a healthy one. If they are bickering all the time it is a clear signal that they need to be separated.

Build Your Students Up

You can control a class by breaking their spirit but such subjugation only makes you nothing more than a dictator and eventually all dictators fall, usually at the hands of those they tried to subjugate.

Better to wrestle with controlled chaos and end up with confident people with a healthy spirit.

Use what you need from my information above and discard what you don't need but please remember one thing; the most important thing that I have learned:

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When it comes to discipline “Be consistent”: everything works as long as you are consistent.

If you attempt to control chaos with chaos, you will only end up with chaos. Don't what ever you do say: “if you do that {naming this crime} then that {naming the punishment} will happen”, only to do something else; or worse still do nothing at all.

Making Mistakes

I kind of dealt with this in the introduction but it is important and needs to be clear. We will make mistakes, but as long as we are willing to repent (that is acknowledge them, genuinely apologize for them and make every effort to not make that mistake again) the kids will forgive us, appreciate us and respect us even more for it.

You may not like the religious connotations of such a word but I'm here to tell you that repentance and forgiveness are one of the main pillars of a good relationship with kids.

Despite the common concept of the leader having to be perfect you cannot expect kids to turn from their misbehavior if you are not. They have a very well developed sense of justice (I sometime wonder if they are born with it) and if you betray that they will not reward you with good behaviour.

The Power Of Shhhhh!

You will often hear people calling shhhhh! in a very aggressive way and it usually does not work. But I have found it to be a very effective tool in settling down students; and not just children.

If I don't do it aggressively and start as loud as I can and work my way down to as low as I can. I continue to Shhhhh until I run out of breath or until it has had the desired affect. If it has not been completely effective I start the shhhh again but only slightly louder than where I finished. So far, I can't think of an instance where it hasn't worked to settle everybody down.

I have had one instance were it was working a little too successfully and the person I was helping resented my effectiveness (and possibly the, apparent “childishness” of it all) and they told me to stop. Unfortunately the act of stopping me resulted in them almost losing control and they had to work very hard to regain it.

Despite the above event the power of Shhhh has proved itself almost every time I have used it. Though I would not use it all the time, in case it loses it's power.

Calling The Student By Name

I think you will have gained the idea that I am a big believer in getting peoples attention first in order to maintain discipline. One of the best ways I know to get attention is to speak to a student by name.

Now obviously you can do this when a class is working away and you are giving individual attention to each student. That is something that all coaches and teachers should be doing during class; but I don't mean that.

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I'm talking about when a class has started to become unruly and is fracturing.

It is very labour intensive and I would never do it if I had to direct a group that has become unsafe but if I have the time and it is safe to do so because the unruliness and fracturing is just beginning, it is not unusual for me to go around and speak to each individual student quickly and quietly to get their attention and gather them together or set them on a task to order.

It can be very hard work and takes a bit of practice but it beats the living daylights out of yelling.

Counting Down Improves Reaction Time

I'm sure that you have heard about the idea of counting to ten to cool off before you over react and this is something that I highly recommend when you are about to explode. But there are other ways to use a count down that help to bring a class together.

When I want students to come together for an activity I will start at 5 and count down to 1. There is never any consequence for being late but they still respond. Mind you I spent a lot of time training them. Whenever I have a game I will count down to encourage them to the starting point quicker and then start the game the instant I get to 1 whether they are ready or not. If the game is too chaotic as a result of this I tell them I am restarting the game and then restart the game, interrupting play with a count down from 5 to 1. I keep doing this until they get to the start quick enough and then I let the game run through.

The process takes a few games for the students to get the picture but once they get it I can use it again and again on all sort of activities; not just games.

Breathing

This is kind of a step up for [dead fish or statues above](#). This one has even more science than the others. If you breathe in the correct way there is a nerve running down your neck that is stimulated. If the class is getting out of hand I sometimes call everybody to breathe. They instantly know what I mean because I have taught them.

The affect is sometimes mind blowing. There is an instant calm that runs through the air and over the whole class.

The method is simple:

Perch your mouth as though you were going to whistle but DON'T whistle and then squeeze it a little tighter. Now breathe through your mouth, in and out very slowly. Big deep breaths. Keep this up until calm is restored and then return to your lesson.

The same can be done by breathing in though your nose very slowly and out though your mouth as above. It's not quite as effective but if someone has a blocked nose it still works and is very meditative.

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The Power Of A Question

I ask Questions to keep students attention.

Any question, it doesn't have to relate to the class. In fact the more random the question the better. Once I have their attention I can then explain to them what I want them to do.

Of course questions like: "Do you understand?" are a waste of time without a follow up questions such as: "Do you have any questions?"

Obviously you can always ask a student to repeat back to you what you said in their own words to clarify understanding and you should do lots of that as an educator but it's just boring if that is the only question that you ask.

Try asking "What's your favorite colour?" completely out of the blue when you want someones attention. It doesn't have to even make sense. In fact the less sense it makes the better attention it will get.

Then there are the more serious question that help learning such as: "What do you think I should do next? and "Where should I place this arm/ foot?" learning is not just about telling students what to do; a question helps them to think a solution through themselves.

I don't always give them the answer. I let them spend time working out for themselves.

I always encourage my students to ask me questions. That means they are thinking and that the sort of students I want. I do this by asking question that encourage them to ask me questions back. Questions such as: "What are you struggling with?" and "what do you need to know?"

Here is an example of a question I use to teach rules that I want to get the students to learn by heart: "what do not have to remember when you are doing this?" The answer is of course is whatever rule it is that I want them to recite back to me.

Naturally if they don't remember the rule I tell it to them and get them to recite it back to me; but the process is all started with a question.

Question are a great way get a students attention and they are also an excellent way to manage a class. This is because whilst they are thinking about the answer to your question, they are not thinking disruptive behaviour.

Negotiate (Bribery works)

When my wife and I started having children of our own we read many books on child rearing. Well if the truth be know my wife ended up reading most of them and underlining the important bits for me to read as I decided that too many were just complete ... well lets just say they weren't worth my time.

Lots of them would talk about how bribery was a very bad thing to do to kids and the alternative they offered was to negotiate. In all honesty I can say that the distinction that most of the books set up was lost on me and I could never see the difference. There were others that made a clear distinction and after I spent my first few weeks trying to negotiate with a 2 year old I decided that, "Bribery works!"

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The following are some examples of my idea of negotiations (“Bribery”):

- I give points or declare winners or some other reward to those who are the quickest getting into a group before a game or pairs for practice or any other combination I need.
- I have already talked about how I offer a game immediately after an activity to motivate.
- When it is hot, I reward good group work with water fights using those mist sprayers I talked about above.
- I hand out stickers for good behaviour. I usually put them on the students own progress chart and use it to double as a record of their progress.

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Conclusion

There you have it, everything I can think of that I use to manage my Judo classes. There may be more but I just can't think of it right now.

But don't think this is the end of it. There is never an end to learning and this applies especially to learning how to manage your class. You should never stop trying to find a better way to do what you need to do.

When you robotically teach Kata (prearranged forms and set movements) to children, parents will love you for it. This is because, too often they think that is the very definition of discipline. But children are not Robots and I will never try to make them that way. They will misbehave and they will always find ways to beat you at your own game. That is the nature of growing up, particularly when it comes to teenagers. That's their job.

When I ran after school care programs I became wise to all of the tricks children use to try and get away with things. This had some significant advantages in my own home with my own children. Everything they tried out on me had already been tried on me at the program. But they got smarter and it wasn't long before I learned just how creative kids can be when it comes to getting out of work and testing their limits. It was one of the best lessons I could learn when it came to class management; children are creative. This is a good thing and something we want to develop and encourage. The down side is that the more they get to know you the more susceptible you are to their wiles; especially if you care for them as you should.

In order to cope we have to also be creative, yet remain just and fair in order to manage. So don't just stop with this document. Be on a constant mission to seek out all the information you can about managing children and in the process you will grow yourself. I promise you the rewards are greater than you can imagine.

If you want to make any comments, ask any questions or you have any issues with this paper please feel free to contact me at:

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