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Photo by Jaren Wilkey, Brigham Young University

Misbehavior in the classroom can be solved as teachers handle disruptive students in a positive and loving manner.

Positive Classroom Discipline

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If teaching youth involved only careful preparation and pleasant delivery, teacher success and satisfaction would probably be much higher. However, a wild card—student misbehavior—can thwart even the best instruction plans. Superfluous conversation, sarcasm, tardiness, put-downs, speaking out of turn, applying makeup, passing notes, and eating breakfast only begin the list of possible disruptions, limited only by the creativity of students.

While gospel understanding and love for those we teach usually lead us to deal with student misbehavior constructively, most of us can recall responses that we regret. In an effort to help us deal with student misbehavior more effectively, this article briefly explains our tendency to use coercion and why we should avoid it, then focuses on positive and practical strategies of preventing and addressing disruptive student behavior.

The Coercive World around Us

Unfortunately, much of the discipline we experience throughout our lives is coercive. By *coercion* I mean the use of punishment or threat of punishment to

get others to act the way we would like and the practice of rewarding people by letting them escape our punishments and threats.¹ Basically, this means making things unpleasant for others until they do it right, or giving them something desirable but taking it away if they don't do what we want.

The use of coercion is all around us. Most people are used to being reprimanded for bad work, yet seldom noticed for good. Our legal code is basically a list of penalties for noncompliance; "justice" is generally sought to impose penalties, not to reward good. Public schools often manage student behavior through coercive measures such as sharp reprimands, imposing additional work, withholding recess, threatening to remove points, or being sent to the office. In a way, most of us have been institutionally trained through experience to use coercive discipline.

So why do we use so much coercion? The simple response is that it works! Punishment and other coercive means can, at least temporarily, stop undesired behavior. Because coercion is so common and its results are often immediate, and because alternatives appear lacking, its use in religious education may seem natural, even warranted. However, not only are there abundant alternatives, but coercion often has unwanted side effects that make its use problematic, particularly in religious education.

Side Effects of Coercive Discipline

Think of coercion (use of punishment, threat of punishment, or taking rewards away) as a prick from a thorn. Upon being pricked, we promptly pull away in an effort to escape the discomfort. We probably also become aware of the circumstances that produced the prick and try to avoid them in the future. The primary learning produced by coercion is escape and avoidance. Most of us try to avoid situations where we might be punished, choose not to associate with people who might punish us, and don't try things for which we might be punished.²

If a student were punished and then simply self-corrected the behavior, punishment might be okay. However, students too often associate punishment with the teacher who gave it, the classroom where it was received, and the educational organization in which it was given. Dr. Murray Sidman explains, "Instead of getting them to learn, punishment causes them to shun the environment where learning is supposed to take place."³ Students who make such associations, justified or not, may seek to escape and avoid the teacher, learning environment, and organization by disengaging teacher instruction, skipping

class, or even dropping out. In a desperate effort to escape perceived coercion, some students may even counter-coerce or retaliate (e.g., insult teacher, rally peers against teacher, threaten not to return, and so forth).

Other limitations and potential side effects of coercion include:⁴

- misbehavior reoccurs in absence of the punisher
- student may learn sneaky behaviors to avoid punishment
- coercion does not teach the appropriate response
- punished individual is often identified as undesirable in eyes of peers
- coercion has weak generalization—the intended lesson seldom extends beyond immediate context
- our use of coercion often models behavior we hope our students will avoid

It has also been noted that coercion becomes less effective over time. As education professors Hofmeister and Lubke explain, “Reprimands lose their effectiveness—future reprimands have to be even more personally destructive to be effective.” This leads to a “cycle of a gradually increasing emphasis on reprimands and decreasing student sensitivity to reprimands.”⁵

For religious educators, there are additional incentives to avoid coercion and seek more positive means of discipline. A key reason to reduce disruptive behavior is to help ensure presence of the Spirit. While the class may be quiet in the wake of coercion, the negative feelings associated with coercion often leave us without the Spirit. Furthermore, use of coercion often stirs up pride, which can make a student less likely to give place in their heart to “the word” (see Alma 32:28). And finally, in our effort to teach the “good news,”⁶ I can think of few tragedies greater than a student wrongly associating our use of coercion with the Church and gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel is not the cause of punishment but rather our consummate means of avoiding it.

Should We Never Use Punishment?

There are clearly instances when the Lord and his prophets have conceded the use of punishment for the good of an individual or benefit of the group (see John 2:14–16; Matthew 16:22–23; Helaman 11:3–4). The Lord says we may reprove “betimes with sharpness” (D&C 121:43) and President David O. McKay says it is “better one [student] starve than an entire class be slowly poisoned.”⁷ I am voicing no objection to the qualified use of such punishment; I have seen instances when such measures were clearly needed and applied in the spirit of love. However, we should be careful not

to take these phrases out of context to justify ill-advised use of coercion. “Reproving betimes with sharpness” is preceded by the Lord’s foremost direction that our influence be maintained “by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; by kindness,” and only sanctioned “when moved upon by the Holy Ghost” (D&C 121:41–43). And President McKay precedes his statement by saying, “You should exhaust all your other sources before you come to that.” Occasionally circumstances may warrant our use of coercion; however, it would be misguided to let the exceptions guide our practice.

President Gordon B. Hinckley said it this way: “Discipline with severity, discipline with cruelty, inevitably leads not to correction, but rather to resentment and bitterness. It cures nothing. It only aggravates the problem. It is self-defeating.”⁸ Due to the potential side effects, we should avoid, as much as possible, the use of coercion (use of punishment, threat of punishment, or taking rewards away). Stated candidly by Dr. Glenn Latham, “Only those who do not know a better way persist in using coercive methods to maintain—or *attempt* to maintain—order in the classroom.”⁹

A Better Way

Avoiding punishment as a means of discipline is not an endorsement of permissiveness. President Hinckley succinctly stated, “Permissiveness never produced greatness.”¹⁰ We need to maintain high standards and expectations of student conduct, but we need to do so in ways conducive to our objective of strengthening youth and inviting them to come unto Christ.

Among the definitions of *discipline* is “training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character.”¹¹ This definition preserves the Latin origin of the word *discipline*, which is *disciplina* “instruction,” from the root *discere* “to learn,” and from which *discipulus* “disciple, pupil” derives.¹² Thus discipline becomes part of our overall effort to teach. And learning is the primary objective of discipline, not silence. As Elder F. Melvin Hammond explained, “Discipline gives direction and teaches self-control.”¹³ Discipline in this manner becomes something we do *for* our students, not *to* them.

Following is a discussion of principles and selected strategies for (1) *preventing* classroom disruptions and (2) *addressing* misbehavior as it occurs in class.

Preventing Disruptive Behavior

When asked how she successfully managed a classroom of perceived troublemakers, a volunteer seminary teacher struggled to respond. I noticed she struggled in part because her success had little to do with how she *managed* misbehavior and a lot to do with how she *prevented* it from ever occurring. Though not an inclusive list, a few preventative measures are discussed here: keeping focus on good instruction, establishing high expectations (rules), and catching students doing good.

Focus on good instruction. As a general rule, centering our efforts on good instruction provides the best means of minimizing disruptive behavior. President Boyd K. Packer explains: “The easiest way to have control over those whom you teach is to teach them something—to feed them. Be well prepared and have an abundance of subject matter organized and ready to serve. There is no substitute for this preparation. As long as you are feeding the students well, few discipline problems will occur.”¹⁴ Simply put, students occupied in the learning process don’t have time to misbehave.

Focusing on good instruction may seem obvious, yet it is surprisingly easy to be distracted by student misbehavior. When disruptions occur, Hofmeister



Photo by Jaren Wilkey, Brigham Young University

Students are more likely to pay attention in class when the teacher has prepared and organized the content of the lesson in a way that engages them.

and Lubke warn that a “cycle can be created, in which lack of attention to the primary instructional tasks creates the vacuum in which misbehavior thrives, and this misbehavior further distracts the teacher from the primary instructional task.”¹⁵ As a young seminary teacher, I experienced this firsthand. Faced with two students in a class of thirty-six who were particularly adept at disruption, I began spending increased time considering and implementing management strategies. As a result, lesson effectiveness waned, and the other thirty-four increasingly disengaged students began creating distractions of their own. Effective instruction needed to be reenthroned.

When considering the best way to deal with class disruptions, look first to improving our instruction—it is one area in which we have total control. And when student disruptions occur, before suspending planned instruction to address it, consider the possibility that pressing ahead with solid instruction can often reengage disruptive students.

Establish and maintain high expectations. President Henry B. Eyring explains, “Your choices of what you expect will have powerful effect on [students’] choices of what to expect of themselves.”¹⁶ There is a tendency for people to behave in ways in which others expect them to behave. This has important implications for student behavior in our classrooms.

When expectations are clearly understood, student behavior not only tends to be more appropriate, but students tend to feel more secure knowing what is expected of them. Students can then focus and achieve without having to guess or seek recognition in an inappropriate manner. By clearly communicating class expectation and consequences for noncompliance, a student is more likely to view our reaction to their misbehavior as fair, thus curtailing punishments’ potential side-effects. On the other hand, students may feel a teacher is unjust when consequences are received if they have not clearly understood the expectation.

We commonly teach expectations of student behavior as classroom “rules.” Whatever the name, the following guidelines can help us communicate them more effectively:¹⁷

- In general, keep rules to four or five. Long lists can be counterproductive. Rules should be such that both students and teachers are able to remember them.
- Each rule should be simple, clear, and general enough to cover a variety of situations. For example, the rule “Be respectful” can address class disruptions, fair treatment of classmates, and much more.

- Rules should be instructive rather than prohibitive. A succinct list of *dos* is generally more effective than a laundry list of *don'ts*.
- Early in the year, formally teach and provide a rationale for the behavior we expect. It may also be beneficial to post and periodically review the rules or expectations.

Teaching and implementing rules or expectations does not require a stern tone or hint of impending punishment to be effective. Expectations can be effectively taught in creative, even fun ways. For example, to convey the expectation that students speak positively to each other, a teacher used a plastic tree and a fictional story about people who cut down trees using insults.¹⁸ A phrase at the bottom of the plastic tree read, “Be kind to my tree!” From then on a negative student remark was likely followed by someone in the class light-heartedly, yet effectively, saying “Be kind to my tree!”

Here is an example of one teacher’s classroom rules and expectations designed using the suggestions above:

Classroom Rules

Be respectful and kind.

Be prepared to learn (in seat, on-time, with scriptures/journal/pencil).

Participate in the lesson.

Seek to make seminary a great experience for all.

Catch students being good. Elder Marvin J. Ashton noted, “We strengthen and build by pointing out the good traits of a person and cause fear and weakness by being unduly critical.”¹⁹ Sadly, we often grow accustomed to reprimanding bad behavior and ignoring the good. However, praising appropriate student behavior increases the likelihood of such behavior. And when we specifically state what the student has done or is doing successfully we teach or remind other students what the appropriate behavior is by drawing attention to a student modeling the correct behavior.

Praise can be regarded as positive feedback. While almost any sincere statement of praise is better than none, Young and his coauthors instruct that recognition of good behavior can be more effective by following these criteria:

- Be specific and descriptive so student is aware of what we are praising. “Great, you’ve got your scriptures and journal at your desk” is better than “Thanks for doing that.”

- Be sincere—students can often detect when we are less than honest or trying to manipulate them.
- Give praise immediately after the appropriate behavior occurs.
- Give praise frequently.²⁰
- Most people enjoy receiving sincere praise. However, some youth concerned with their image may be embarrassed by a teacher's public praise. To reduce this possibility while maintaining the benefits of praise, Randall S. Sprick recommends a number of things we can do:
 - "Praise individual students privately."
 - "Describe the positive behavior in a nonemotional and nonpersonal manner."
 - "Avoid pauses after praising an individual student."
 - "Evaluate effectiveness of your feedback by what students do, not by what they say."²¹

Addressing Disruptive Classroom Behavior

While a significant amount of behavior problems can be avoided through preventative measures, disruptions may still occur. How we handle these disruptions can directly impact the tone of our class and often provides a measuring stick by which students determine our view of them as well. As once said, "It's how you treat the one that reveals how you regard the ninety-nine."²²

In my experience, most classroom misbehavior is not malicious, and it is counterproductive for us to think so. By and large, students simply need a prompt or occasional reminder of the expected behavior and its rationale. The techniques discussed here are aimed at handling common misbehaviors in their early stages (for example, disruptive talking, nonparticipation, clowning around, and not following instructions). Although not a comprehensive list, these techniques can be very effective in dealing with misbehavior without coercion.

Use simple reminders. Students often engage in behaviors without realizing they are interfering with instruction. For these behaviors, teachers can use simple cues and signals that remind students what they should be doing yet require minimal disruption to instruction. For example:

- Signal or gesture. Making eye contact with a disruptive student while the rest of class is otherwise engaged and motioning the student put away homework, open scriptures, discontinue conversation, or listen (e.g., head nod, pointing to ear, and so on). Remember, the purpose is

to remind, not punish. An overly stern look or display of disappointment is not necessarily productive.

- **Proximity.** Moving closer to the disruptive student can serve as a quiet reminder to be more attentive. This approach generally does not require a break in instruction. Upon noticing approach of the teacher, most talkative students will stop. When a teacher is delivering instruction next to their desk, few students would consider being disruptive.

These are quick ways to remind students of their behavior without interrupting instruction. Again, such approaches assume most students want to have a positive classroom experience and therefore need only a simple reminder to get back on task.

Involve the disruptive student. Inviting a disruptive student to participate in the lesson can be very beneficial. This can be done by asking them to read, share what they think, give an example, or respond in some other way. If handled correctly, this approach can quickly engage the student in the lesson, thus eliminating the disruption. However, it is important to remember that the purpose is to engage the student in the lesson, not to put them on the spot or humiliate them.

A common mistake when asking disruptive students to participate is doing so when they are unable to readily respond. For example, a teacher asks a disruptive or disengaged student to read a particular verse of scripture. Everyone waits while the student picks up scriptures, asks teacher to repeat reference, and fumbles to find the chapter. While the disruptive behavior made instruction difficult, the wait brought instruction to a halt. Such delay can be avoided. For example, the teacher could ask three students to read consecutive verses, having the disruptive student read last. This allows the disruptive/unengaged student time to find the verse and be ready to participate. Also, participation can be gained in ways that require little or no prior knowledge of the lesson. For example, the teacher might ask a disruptive student to share what he or she might do in a particular circumstance then relate their response to similar circumstances in the lesson being taught.

Ignore inconsequential behavior. Ignoring disruptive behavior may seem counterintuitive to maintaining high expectations. Yet our attention to a student's misbehavior may at times have a reinforcing effect, thus making the misbehavior more likely in future. If this is the case, and the misbehavior is inconsequential, that is, annoying but does not hurt or demean, like talking

out of turn or making a silly comment, it may be best to ignore it, focusing instead on good instruction.

However, ignoring inconsequential behavior is not an idle approach; the misbehavior may still be addressed in a not-so-public setting (i.e., after class), and consequences may still apply (i.e., reflected on citizenship grade). Also, ignoring inappropriate behavior is most effective when we praise even the slightest increase in the student's effort toward improvement.

Stop-Redirect. When simpler methods are ineffective, it may be necessary to stop a student, group of students, or even an entire class and quickly instruct or remind them of the appropriate behavior. When using this method, Latham recommends that a teacher address the misbehaving students as discreetly as possible, and in a calm voice follow these steps:²³

Stop-Redirect	Example (small group)	Example (classwide)
1. Say something positive.	1. "I can see you two are having a good laugh."	1. "Class, I'm glad you've got a lot of energy today."
2. Briefly describe the problem behavior.	2. "However, your conversation is disrupting others."	2. "Let's focus that energy on what King Benjamin is teaching us in chapter 5."
3. Describe the desired alternative behavior.	3. "Try finding the principle mentioned in verses 4–6."	3. "Read verses 7–8, considering the connection between covenants and freedom."
4. Give a reason why the new behavior is more desirable.	4. "I think you'll find an important message."	4. "This directly applies to our own covenants."
5. Provide positive feedback.	5. "Good search. What principles did you find?"	5. "Better focus, thanks. What connections do you see?"

Although this procedure may appear cumbersome, its application can be quite natural. The effectiveness behind this approach is that it *teaches* or reteaches the appropriate behavior in a simple, clear, and positive manner.

Talk to a disruptive student privately. At times it is helpful to speak privately with a student who continues to cause disruptions. This can often be accomplished briefly before or after class. By going "between thee and him alone" (Matthew 18:15), a student is less likely to feel the pressure of peers, power struggles become less probable, and the student is more likely to reason. When consulting with the student privately, *Teaching, No Greater Call* suggests, "You should do so tactfully and with love. Describe the conduct that

is disruptive while at the same time making clear that you love and respect the person. Ask for the person's support, and try to find solutions together. Then do all you can to show increased love. As President Brigham Young counseled, "Never chasten beyond the balm you have within you to bind up."²⁴

Additionally, if the student persists in the disruptive behavior, speaking with them privately is often the best time to discuss consequences (e.g., move seats, make-up work, consultation with parents, etc.). As a rule of thumb, these private meetings with students about classroom behavior should be brief, clear, and as positive as possible.

Involve peers. Our students have a desire to belong, to be noticed, to be of concern to those whom they respect and consider important. For this reason, employing peers in the management of student behavior can be very powerful. Having students both ignore disruptive behavior and respectfully remind one another of class expectations can significantly reduce misbehavior. We can promote positive peer support of class expectations by acknowledging such support when it occurs, utilizing class presidencies, and enlisting the help of individual students. Finally, our respectful interaction with disruptive students provides an instructive model for students to follow.

A word of caution: While peer influence can be powerful when employed in a positive way, it can be destructive when applied coercively. Few things are potentially more devastating to a youth than to be collectively punished by peers, particularly peers in the gospel. Furthermore, few things can drive a stronger wedge between a teacher and a student than a student perceiving the teacher to be an instigator of a coercive reaction by peers. Coercive peer influence, even when it stifles disruptive behavior, offers little chance that "all may be edified" (D&C 88:122).

Have a Plan

A "discipline plan" is developed when a teacher considers possible student misbehavior and determines ahead of time how they will handle those problems should they arise. A clear plan helps us avoid making poor decisions when under pressure and helps keep us from falling back on coercive means. Without a clear discipline plan, teachers are likely to rely on instinct and react emotionally to each situation. Furthermore, establishing a discipline plan and implementing it consistently helps us ensure just treatment of all students.

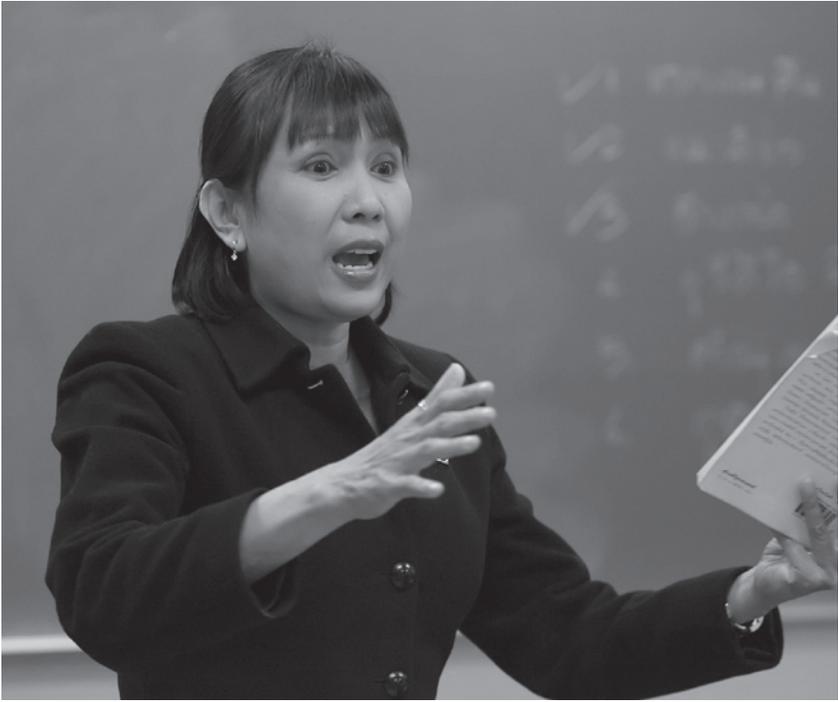
To create a discipline plan, consider the most common classroom disruptions then decide which intervention to use first. Next decide which

intervention you would use second if this intervention were to fail. And, if the first two interventions did not work, decide which intervention you would use next—and so forth. When devising a discipline plan, it is also important to remember President Packer’s counsel: “The successful teacher will not overreact. He will start with gentle elements of discipline and move to the more powerful and persuasive types. . . . Most situations can be controlled with even a slight gesture. If the gesture does not work, the teacher can always apply something a little more intense. On the other hand, if he fires his heavy artillery first, there’s little left to do, if the student will not respond.”²⁵ As a general rule, a behavior plan establishes a hierarchy of interventions from least to most intensive. Here is an example of one volunteer seminary teacher’s discipline plan:

Behavior Plan: How I will react to classroom disruptions

1. Simple gesture: motion to open scriptures or put homework away, finger to my lips, ear, etc.
2. Proximity.
3. Class involvement: ask student to participate (e.g., read, share opinion or experience, etc).
 - a. Caution: avoid requests that delay instruction or make student look foolish.
4. Stop-redirect: Individually or classwide; refer to class expectations.
5. Talk to student alone before or after class (by phone if needed).
 - a. Avoid emotion.
 - b. Briefly describe what I see, what I expect, and why it’s important.
 - c. Ask their support in making class better for them and everyone else.
 - d. Briefly explain consequences should behavior continue (e.g., assigned seat, contact parents, etc.). Express desire that they avoid such consequences.
6. Peer support: Involve class presidency and or others (avoid “project” mentality).
7. Contact parents: Inform them of the behavior, class expectations, explain what’s been done, seek their input, and explain how you plan to proceed. May invite parent to attend early-morning class with their student.
8. Contact priesthood leader only if misbehavior continues unsustainably, be descriptive of student behavior and what’s been done. May invite a member of the bishopric to attend class and assist with management of student behavior.

Photo by Jaren Wilkey, Brigham Young University



Disruptive students respond well to teachers who use positive discipline techniques and do so in a loving manner.

Even when using an effective behavior plan, occasion may arise when consequences need to be applied (e.g., assigned seat, contacting parent, and so forth). To be considered fair, consequences need to be understood by students prior to any rule violation warranting their delivery. And when delivering consequences we should avoid emotion, lectures, and longwinded explanations. Generally an approach that is succinct, matter-of-fact, and void of animosity is best. Remember the intent of such consequences is appropriate behavior not retribution. Furthermore, as some students may consider consequences “reproving,” we should show “forth afterward an increase of love . . . lest he esteem thee to be his enemy” (D&C 121:43).

Avoid Common Traps

Dr. Glenn Latham has identified a number of teacher responses to misbehavior that often trap teachers into reactive and escalatory responses. These traps include:²⁶

- Criticism: fault finding
- Sarcasm: making fun of a student through ridicule
- Threats: strong warning of impending punishment if student does not quickly behave
- Questioning: asking students to explain why they misbehave
- Arguing: seeking to convince students the teacher is right and students are wrong
- Force (verbal or physical): shouting at students or physical intimidation
- Despair: portraying a sense of hopelessness

Dr. Latham explains, “These counterproductive measures typically get teachers trapped into a quagmire of reactive, out-of-control responding that creates a coercive environment which students want to escape and avoid.”²⁷

Principles That Help Guide Our Discipline

We choose. Some may occasionally justify misuse of coercion on student misbehavior (e.g., “I wouldn’t have angrily raised my voice if they had listened in the first place”). To so justify negates our agency as teachers. We are always faced with a moment of decision after a student misbehaves. If we do not accept responsibility for our actions in these moments, we have given up our ability to act and therefore relegate ourselves to be acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:26).

Be consistent. Consistency in our discipline helps avoid many pitfalls. If we make exceptions we in effect demonstrate to students that less is acceptable. The student may see us as unfair. They learn that we can be manipulated.²⁸ Furthermore, it is likely that many of the most challenging classroom disruptions would never rise to such concern if relatively small and simple approaches, like those outlined above, were consistently applied early on.

Student behavior can adapt. Some may feel we have little influence over classroom behavior because students bring ingrained patterns of behavior with them. Certainly each student’s background and behavior are unique, yet behavior is largely a product of its immediate environment.²⁹ With some ease we socially adapt our behavior to fit a variety of situations such as a movie theater, a sporting event, and church. We can expect our students to similarly adapt their behavior to our class.

Teacher perception of student matters. President Packer explains: “It is essential for a teacher to understand that people are basically good. It is essential to know that their tendency is to do the thing that is right. Such an

exalted thought is productive of faith. . . . There was always hope. No matter how fractious or difficult or lawless others appeared, I knew that somewhere within them was a spark of divinity to which we can appeal.”³⁰

Don't take it personally. On the whole student misbehavior is not malevolent. Talking to a friend, occasional disinterest in lesson, trying to portray the latest version of cool, even mischievousness seldom if ever indicates student contempt for a teacher. Assuming student maliciousness is generally counterproductive.



We socially adapt our behavior to fit a variety of situations such as a movie theater, a sporting event, and church. We can expect our students to similarly adapt their behavior to our class.

Conclusion

President Hinckley stated, “In large measure the harshness that characterizes so much of our society is an outgrowth of the harshness imposed upon children years ago.”³¹ Sadly, children raised on coercive teaching are likely to

follow similar patterns when they become teachers and parents. Our example of positive discipline can help break this cycle by showing loving and positive approaches to discipline that students may not see anywhere else.

Furthermore, beyond cessation of misbehavior, discipline should reflect our commission to teach. President Hinckley explained, “Eternal life will come only as men and women are taught with such effectiveness that they change and discipline their lives. They cannot be coerced into righteousness or into heaven.”³² In many ways, student misbehavior presents an opportunity to teach and may indeed require good teaching to be properly corrected. Such an opportunistic view of misbehavior can dramatically alter for good our approach to disruptive students.

Finally, use of positive discipline allows students to more readily notice our love for them, and more importantly the Savior’s love. And as students more readily recognize this love they are more likely to respond to what is taught in meaningful ways. As the Prophet Joseph Smith explained, “Nothing is so much calculated to lead people to forsake sin as to take them by the hand, and watch over them with tenderness. When persons manifest the least kindness and love to me, O what power it has over my mind, while the opposite course has a tendency to harrow up all the harsh feelings and depress the human mind.”³³ Appealing to the ultimate example, President Howard W. Hunter taught, “God’s chief way of acting is by persuasion and patience and long-suffering, not by coercion and stark confrontation. He acts by gentle solicitation and by sweet enticement. He always acts with unfailing respect.”³⁴ May we do the same. **RE**

Notes

1. Murray Sidman, *Coercion and Its Fallout* (Boston: Authors Cooperative, 1989), 1.
2. Adapted from K. Richard Young and Richard P. West, *Positive Strategies for Teaching and Discipline* (Logan, UT: Utah State University, 1992), 2–3.
3. Sidman, *Coercion and Its Fallout*, 78.
4. See figures section in Young and West, *Positive Strategies*.
5. Alan Hofmeister and Margaret Lubke, *Research into Practice: Implementing Effective Teaching Strategies* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1990), 169.
6. The word *gospel* is an Old English term *gōd spell* (*gōd* “good” + *spel* “news” = “good news”) that generally refers to Jesus, his atoning sacrifice, and resulting promise of hope and salvation. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Good_news_\(Christianity\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Good_news_(Christianity)).
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8. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Environment of Our Homes,” *Ensign*, June 1985, 3.

9. Glenn I. Latham, *Behind the Schoolhouse Door: Eight Skills Every Teacher Should Have* (Logan, UT: Utah State University, 1997), 8–9.
10. Gordon B. Hinckley, “It’s True, Isn’t It?” *Ensign*, July 1993, 2.
11. *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v. “discipline.”
12. *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th ed., s.v. “discipline.”
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14. Boyd K. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975), 153.
15. Alan Hofmeister and Margaret Lubke, *Research into Practice: Implementing Effective Teaching Strategies* (Allyn and Bacon, 1990), 162–63.
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20. Young and others, *Prevention Plus*, 18.
21. Randall S. Sprick, *Discipline in the Secondary Classroom: A Problem-by-Problem Survival Guide* (West Nyack, NY: The Center for Applied Research in Education, 1985), 172–74.
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