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CHAPTER V

Principles and Methods of Reducing
Discipline Problems

The methods previously outlined in Chapter IV by the thesis and the basic principles of the thesis developed in previous chapters, nevertheless, are dependent upon the rapport and communications between teacher and pupils. This in turn is dependent upon the personality and maturity of the teacher.

The teacher must have a well adjusted personality. He must have interests outside of the teaching field and be successful in skills and hobbies outside of the classroom. Only such a person -- one with a well satisfied and adjusted ego -- can best relate to the complex personalities encountered in the classroom. Gates and Jersild list some of the areas that a teacher must satisfactorily solve for himself before attaining maturity.¹

Problems Solved During Age 15-30 To Achieve Emotional
Maturity

1. Emancipation from home.
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¹ A. J. Gates, A. J. Jersild, J. R. McConnell, R. C. Challman. Educational Psychology (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1948), p. 757.

In order to communicate to the pupils, the teacher must also discover the motivating forces of each of them. In that manner, the teacher will be able to make the children willing to cooperate. Each child must see how he benefits and his interests and needs are satisfied by his positive behavior. It is a question of give and take. The child cooperates and in turn his needs are satisfied. The teacher must appeal to one child's pride, to another's desire to please his parents, to a third child's willingness to succeed and attain high marks, to a fourth child's ideal of being the center of attention and to a fifth student's wish to compete with his rival sibling at home.

In order to accomplish this task the teacher must act like a business man and think in terms of the pupils and not burden the children with his feelings and moods. This may be criticized on the ground that the teacher is not acting naturally and sincerely. Children can detect the true attitude of an imposture and will lose confidence in the teacher after such behavior. This argument doesn't disturb the contention of the thesis that the teacher act the role of the leader who guides the pupils to a common language. The thesis, however, stipulated that the teacher have a well adjusted and mature personality. The teacher must have developed a proper balance between his own ego, id, and superego to be able to tolerate

disturbances on the part of the students. He shouldn't be so moved by his moods that they interfere with ability to deal objectively with the different personalities of his pupils. The thesis doesn't propose that a teacher seem happy and satisfied when he actually doesn't feel that way. The thesis proposes that only teachers who are well adjusted personalities should teach in the Hebrew school. It agrees that children are quick to recognize the imposture of the teacher who seems happy and satisfied when in reality he isn't. However, the well adjusted teacher can naturally play many roles in relating to the children and appealing to them. He should, however, principally maintain the role of a democratic leader and guide. He must be friendly and have common interests as his pupils, such as a sense of humor and an interest in sports. He should, however, use discretion and not encourage the friendliness to develop into contempt by over-indulgence. The children want an adult whom they can respect as well as one with whom they can be close. Thus, of course, the teacher should not permit students to strike him even in jest. Similarly, he shouldn't discuss his private life with the students.

On the other hand, the teacher shouldn't play a sophisticated role of aloofness from his students. The thesis

favors the view of the inherent goodness of each individual and admits that there are individuals who have distorted views of reality and would therefore take advantage of a teacher's kindness. This, however, doesn't mean that the policy of a teacher or school has to be determined by a few recalcitrant students. Justice toward the others demands that the policy be set to please the greatest majority and to deal specifically with the exceptions. Aloofness on the part of the teacher may create certain fear, even among those students with distorted views, and this fear prevents them from daring to initiate trouble. It, however, also discourages any endeavors of closer rapport on the part of the students. In a non-authoritarian community, the teacher taking too many precautions to maintain his dignity may discover that he has achieved self-respect but has no students. The thesis finds support in the writing of W. C. Bowers.² Bowers states:

"Only in proportion as there is a shared experience can there be shared communications or understanding....the sense of reality and worth in ideas depends upon their rootage in the deep and warm soil of personal and social experience."

By shared experience, Bowers refers to the intimate and informal

²W. C. Bowers, Character Through Creative Experience (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930), p. 145.

atmosphere of school where pupils and teacher can interact with each other. It is incumbent upon the teacher to face challenges promptly and firmly, but vigilance to accomplish this task doesn't require him to remain aloof. On the contrary, a different avenue has to be pursued. The teacher should always be in good physical and mental condition. He should be rested and maintain his mental equilibrium. He should engage in outside activities and find success, satisfaction, and recognition from these activities. He should develop the habit of facing reality objectively; he should strive toward emotional maturity. The resultant state of mind will best qualify him to deal with any emergent challenges on the part of students who take advantage of the teacher's kindness and endeavor to test him to determine how far they can go.³

As was already indicated, the individual case and particular circumstances will determine whether a friendly approach, a rebuke or punitive measures should be used. It must, again, be stressed that a teacher, in order to be successful, must be flexible. As already indicated, he must be able to relate to each pupil according to his needs and therefore

³Norma E. Cutts and Nicholas Moseley, Teaching the Delinquent Pupil (New York: Longman, Green and Co., 1957), p. 38.

assume different roles for the different pupils. So, too, must he be prepared to alter his role toward the individual pupil, when he notices a change. Thus, an aggressive pupil who has quieted down should be treated differently than before. The fact that a teacher was firm toward certain pupils in the beginning of the term doesn't mean that he has to adhere to such a policy if these pupils show a sign of change.

Some educators advocate a strict policy in the beginning of the term with a gradual lessening of firmness as the teacher gains control over the class and order is assured. Others educators advise the teacher to appear stern, always to stand, and not to stand too near the pupils until perfect control is instituted. Then the teacher could relax his strict measures. Again, this matter reiterates the issues just thrusted out. It is not necessary to take such measures as a precautionary means. If certain individuals act up they should be treated differently and, if need be, be punished. But certainly the rest of the class should not be deprived of a democratic atmosphere because of possible abuse at the hands of a minority. This, of course, doesn't mean that a teacher should introduce the whole array of radical liberal policies. When he judges that the abusive reaction of a sizable minority to such a policy would disturb class harmony, rather he should

gradually introduce them stressing the principle that for every privilege an equal responsibility is demanded.

Tension and non-cooperation on the part of the students may stem from their ignorance, inability, or unwillingness to understand and accept their role in relation to the teacher. Some children may interpret the teacher's friendly attitude and behavior as resembling their parent's conduct. They may, therefore, relate to the teacher as they would to their parents. They may even go to the extent of projecting certain ambivalent feelings of love and hatred that they hold for their parents to the teacher. Moseley⁴ likewise adds that misbehavior and aggression directed to the teacher is not because the teacher is hated, but because he represents a symbol of authority. As a consequence, they may actively or passively not cooperate as they do at home. It is therefore the task of the teacher to clearly impress the students with their role and his.

The avenues of communication to each student varies according to his personality. It was already indicated that it is necessary to motivate each student differently. So, too,

⁴Ibid.

at times it is imperative for the teacher to determine a radically different form of communication when ordinary vocal channels don't impress non-cooperating, recalcitrant students. Every individual, even when he is performing a highly motivated task, nevertheless, has interfering forces and ambivalent feelings that detract him from initiating the task or continuing it. The fact that he commenced and adhered to his task is a sign that the positive forces were stronger. When an individual contemplates doing or refraining from doing an act he consciously or subconsciously weighs the possible resulting pleasures and benefits against the unpleasant, painful experiences and losses. Thus, a person planning an unsociable act will be restrained if he understands that he will receive swift and sure punishment. The same principle holds true in the case of the recalcitrant, non-cooperating pupil. It is unfortunate that the positive emotional forces are not powerful enough to sway him to cooperate; but it also can be as unfortunate if the teacher does not provide the firm limits every youngster inherently desires for his feeling of security. The teacher, by his negligence, encourages the youngsters in his blundering behavior.

This point, however is an issue that is hotly debated by educators. Some educators feel that each individual wishes

to be sociable and cooperate, but he has, as mentioned, ambivalent feelings. If an outsider interferes and endeavors to impose his view, the individual's ego will be challenged and, consequently, he will oppose the outside interference by strengthening his own antithetical view.⁵ This thesis as applied to the non-cooperating student means that the recalcitrant pupil becomes more adamant when the teacher applies punitive measures.

This view, however, is challenged by the findings of the Remmers and Radler study of The American Teenager,⁶ as well as Kvaraceus and Miller in Delinquent Behavior, Culture and the Individual,⁷ and Norma E. Cutts and N. Moseley in Teaching the Disorderly Pupil. They discovered that youngsters and adolescents need the feeling of being assured that

⁵Kantor, J. R., A Survey of the Science of Psychology (Bloomington, Indiana: The Principia Press, Inc., 1933), pp. 321-335.

⁶H. H. Remmers and D. H. Radler, The American Teenager (Indianapolis, New York: The Bobbs Merrill Company, Inc., 1957), pp. 68, 116.

⁷William C. Kvaraceus and Walter B. Miller, Delinquent Behavior, Culture and the Individual (Washington, D.C.: National Educational Association of the U.S., 1959) pp. 60-100.

⁸Norma E. Cutts and Nicholas Moseley, Teaching the Disorderly Pupil (New York: Longman, Green and Co., 1957) pp. 137-138.

a powerful adult is in back of them to prevent them from injuring themselves or others by their immature behavior. True, the recalcitrant students will resent the interference but ambivalently, they will also welcome it consciously or subconsciously. It is similarly true, that certain individuals may become more adamantly non-cooperating by outside interference. But it must be conceded by these opposing punitive measures that if the issue is clearly established that non-cooperating behavior doesn't pay in the short or long run then the recalcitrant pupil will change if for no other reason than to escape punishment. Certainly, there were positive motivating forces that impelled the pupil to come to school. These forces will be further strengthened when the student, who is forced to cooperate, attains the feeling of success realized upon achievement and mastery of the subject matter. It shouldn't be argued that you can force the students to refrain from disturbing but you can't force them to learn with the old adage "you can bring the horse to the water, but you can't make him drink." This argument can be reflected by the term used through out the thesis to describe misbehavior -- non-cooperation, which implies both the assertive form of aggressive disturbance, as well as the passive form of non-

learning. Both forms of behavior are methods used to challenge the authority of the teacher. Both forms test the rate of the teacher-pupil relationship, the passive form being a shrewder form of probe. Certainly the teacher will not respond to the challenge when the pupil apparently isn't actively disturbing. The passive form is a chance the pupil takes to capitalize on the laziness and reluctance of the teacher, to engage in a battle over such a minor issue. Besides, the pupil feels that he wouldn't be discovered and if he will be detected he reasons that he alone possesses the willingness to learn and is sole master. Certainly, he is in a powerful position. However, passive non-cooperation is no more difficult to alter than assertive misbehavior. It requires from the teacher the same initiative and willingness to spend as much time and energy in this battle as in the battle against assertive misbehavior.

It doesn't require genius on the part of the teacher to discover if the student is learning or not. A student's attitude in the classroom, the way he sits up, the way he responds, the way he reacts, the way he applies himself, all reflect his seriousness or lack of adaptation to the work.

In both forms of misbehavior it is incumbent upon

the teacher to investigate and find all the possible causes for the non-cooperative behavior.⁹ Nevertheless, it is impossible to perform a scientific survey and implement the long-range results when a case of assertive misbehavior occurs. At the moment of occurrence, order must be established. Otherwise, a chain reaction occurs and other less daring pupils take this as a cue and are encouraged since the non-cooperating pupil was not reprimanded. Then the teacher will not have one problem but an entire class in chaos.¹⁰ The teacher, therefore, has to use means that will obtain immediate results. He can try to motivate the assertively non-cooperating pupil to refrain from his misconduct by appealing to his pride, by calling upon him to recite and giving him recognition in a legitimate fashion. However, when that doesn't work the teacher should use punitive measures. Some methods used in enforcing discipline are: simple control, restitution and reparation, detention after school, dismissal from class and isolation, punishing the group for the offenses of one person, extra tasks, enforced apologies, lowering the marks,

⁹Philip W. L. Cox and R. Emerson Langfitt, High-School Administration and Supervision (New York: The American Book Company, 1954), pp. 175-187.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 15.

corporal punishment, suspension and expulsion, social disapproval, and loss of privileges. The methods listed have certain advantages and disadvantages that will be elaborated.

Simple control means a look at the offender signifying disapproval, waiting for attention before continuing the instruction, a mild reproof and laughing off minor infractions. The advantages of this method is that it is simple, allows instruction to proceed, avoids unpleasant scenes, and has few harmful effects on the personality. The disadvantages are that it attacks surface behavior only, may be ineffective, and it depends largely on the personality of the teacher. In difficult unruly classes, however, simple measures of control will be unsuccessful.¹¹

Restitution and reparation for things damaged willfully associates the punishment in a natural way with the offense. It teaches the child that damages done through willful action on his part must be rectified. This form of punishment can be administered fairly, impartially and unemotionally. The disadvantages are that the pupil may not have the money to pay for the damages; or children may obtain the money too

¹¹David J. Wiens, "Pupil Personnel Work - IX Disciplinary Procedures," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Edit. Walter S. Monroe (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), pp. 945-48.

readily from parents, thus destroying the educative value of the punishment.¹²

Many schools use demerits to record non-cooperation. As a result of a stipulated number of demerits, the student is assigned to detention room for a stipulated time. Experience has shown that recalcitrant students are not affected too greatly by detention room. In fact many students owe so much time to detention room that at the end of the year they have to stay for complete days in order to complete their time. Detention room becomes another period, in which pupils act worse than in the classroom. As a result it loses its punitive effect.¹³ Dismissal from class and isolation gets rid of the troublemaker or silences him. It may be effective since it bars the pupil from association with his group. However, it bars the pupil from necessary instruction, and it can create a scene and be humiliating to the offender. On the other hand, the pupil gets considerable attention and dismissal may be exactly what the pupil wants as relief from the boredom of the class work. If the pupil is sent to the

¹²Ibid.

¹³Nelson Bossing, Progressive Methods of Teaching in Secondary Schools (New York: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1942) pp. 137-189.

principal's office, all the above-mentioned disadvantages exist, in addition to transferring the teacher's problem to another authority. Only in severe cases would teachers be justified in sending a pupil to the principal's office. Both principals and pupils lose respect for teachers who send a large number of petty cases to the office.¹⁴

Punishing the group for the offenses of one person may be expedient in arousing group disapproval toward the offender. However, it may align the group against the teacher, and create a hostile climate.¹⁵

Extra tasks have no worthwhile advantages. The punishment bears no connection to the behavior. It creates added distaste for school work and destroys incentive to learn.¹⁶

Enforced apologies satisfy only the teacher, but stir up resentment on the part of the pupils. Enforced

¹⁴LaVerne Krantz, "Administrative Procedure for the Control of Discipline in the High School," American School Board Journal, XCI (September 1935), 78.

¹⁵David J. Wiens, "Pupil Personnel Work - IX Disciplinary Procedures," Encyclopedia of Educational Research. Edit. Walter S. Monroe (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950), pp. 945-48.

¹⁶J. B. Edmondson, Joseph Roemer and Francis Bacon, The Administration of the Modern Secondary School (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1948), pp. 203-25.

apologies teach students to be hypocritical, to give an apology without meaning it. However, if the pupil can be shown that his actions are undesirable and be induced to apologize with sincerity, this method may be useful.¹⁷

Lowering the marks satisfies the teacher's need for surface order, but doesn't treat the cause of behavior. The teacher who uses marks as a disciplinary device is misusing the purpose of marks.¹⁸

Although corporal punishment is dramatic, and associates punishment with pain, it tends to humiliate the older pupil. It may also create a personal battle between the pupil and the teacher and deepens the resentment and hostility of the pupil and his parents.¹⁹

Suspension removes the offender from the situation and allows him time for reflection. Suspension, however, bars the pupil from instruction and causes him to fall behind in his work. It doesn't treat the cause of his behavior, and

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Nelson Bossing, Progressive Methods of Teaching in Secondary Schools, (New York: Houghton-Mifflin), pp. 137-189.

may be exactly what the student desires, reprieve from the school work. Suspension also tends to alienate the parents. Suspension can only be justified in very unusual circumstances. Though the action may be begun with the teacher, the principal and Board of Directors should be the only authorities to suspend a pupil. The pupil should be given the opportunity to make up the work he misses and be re-admitted as soon as he realizes the seriousness of his action.²⁰ Expulsion is considered desirable only as the very last measure which a school can take and empowers a school to get rid of mentally deranged youth and severe delinquents. The welfare of the group has to be seriously endangered to justify expulsion.²¹ Some schools have experimented with the student inspired organization, the G.O., as an instrument of cooperation. The G.O. in the beginning of the year recommends rules and procedures of cooperation and discipline which are voted on by the entire school body. When any

²⁰David J. Wiens, "Pupil Personnel Work - IX Disciplinary Procedures," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, pp. 945-48.

²¹Ibid.

pupil violates these rules, he is judged by his fellow students and a punishment is assigned. The advantage of having a student body decide on rules of behavior is that the student's aversion to outside adult interference is thus averted. Discipline and cooperation are not a matter of pleasing or opposing the adults, an outside group, but are rather a matter of being sociable.

The adolescent is socially dependent on the approval of his peer group and would react approvingly and cooperatively to the standards that his peer group establishes. This idea is substantiated by the writings of Jean Piaget.

For the adolescent to maintain his place within his own group he must learn and fulfill the expectations of that group. To achieve mobility up the ladder he must learn the expectations of the group to which he aspires. This would also include moral knowledge and moral behavior.²²

The pre-adolescent also is dependent on the social approval of his friends, but to a lesser degree than the adolescent. Consequently, the rules of discipline established by a G.O. is a practical help to lessen discipline problems.

Loss of privileges is a form of punishment that enables the child to feel that if his behavior imperils the

²²Jean Piaget, "Social Factors in Moral Development" Readings in Social Psychology (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1947), pp. 159, 161-162.

group's effectiveness, society will disapprove of that action by not associating with him. When that measure is not effective, privileges of extra curricular activities are denied him. The help of the home in cooperating with the teacher by withholding certain privileges may greatly facilitate the task of the teacher.²³

The methods of encouraging cooperation and administering punishment that were mentioned have strong points and weaknesses. The eclectic position of the thesis proposes a synthetic method that has been effectively used for five years in five communities with success. Student inspired standards are enacted by the G.O. The students are encouraged to exert moral suasion upon each other to maintain their standards. Whenever moral suasion is ineffective with some students, the principal or teacher handles the discipline problem. Whenever possible, a conference is held with the student and when necessary the student is referred for guidance. When it is feasible conferences are held with the family.

²³Wiens, loc. cit.

In the case of assertively non-cooperating students, the teacher in the classroom uses simple control. If that doesn't help the teacher gives demerits for each act of non-cooperation. A conference is held with these students after class when necessary. If these students accumulate six demerits within one day their privileges of participating in extra-curricular activities or taking part in activity projects is suspended for a period of one day. In case these students obstinately continue in their non-cooperation for three days and accumulate a total of eighteen demerits in a period of two weeks, their parents are called. The parents are asked to cooperate and withhold certain privileges at home. The reasoning for this form of punishment is that some pupils don't comprehend any other form of communication than the withholding of privileges at school or at home. The form of administering punishment by withholding privileges thus permits the offending student to remain in the classroom and participate in the lesson. It also avoids detention room and keeping the children from having dinner with their family. This method has greatly reduced discipline problems in the five communities with which the author and his associates have been affiliated.

The other methods previously enumerated of restitution and reparation are used when necessary. Detention is frowned upon for the reasons previously mentioned. Dismissal from class and isolation is not used since the demerit system makes it unnecessary. Punishing the group for the offenses of one person, extra tasks, enforced apologies, lowering the marks, corporal punishment, are not used for the reasons mentioned. Suspension and expulsion is a power that the Hebrew and Sunday school maintains in case the parents don't cooperate with the teacher. In essence, social disapproval and loss of privileges at school and at home have been found to be the most effective deterrents for the recalcitrant student.

Although the thesis suggested basic principles to cope with discipline problems, it nevertheless recognizes that there are other factors that affect the behavior of the students. The classroom atmosphere is a variant that can either be a stimulant to cooperative behavior of the students or a problem to complicate matters.²⁴

Classroom atmosphere is created by many factors. Some of them are the appearance of the school plant and class-

²⁴Educational Summary, an Arthur C. Craft Publication, IV (November 20, 1951), 6.

room. The plant of the school is important for the mental climate it creates. An old building dating back for several generations has the advantage of conveying a traditional mental climate and appealing to the youngster to maintain the long chain of tradition. On the other hand, youngsters from progressive homes are disturbed by such a traditional atmosphere. As far as they are concerned, a modern building reflects a continuation of the life to which they are accustomed.

Other factors associated with the plant are the appearance and cleanliness of the school and classrooms. Students will be impressed by the refreshing colors of their newly painted classroom. The sense of cleanliness will make them proud of their school. Teachers will be wise to decorate their rooms and the bulletin board. These decorations can be used to reflect the different holidays and seasons. The students themselves can be inspired to participate in contributing to the bulletin board and to the classroom decorations. Thus, "by doing" they will feel a greater association with the school and will strive to keep it neat. This attitude of neatness similarly should be encouraged in regard

to clothes and books.²⁵

It is obvious that students will appreciate the consideration showed by teachers in keeping the temperature regulated by opening or shutting windows as need be. The same applies to seeing that the room is well lighted or protected by the blinds from the glare of the sun. These are details that make life more pleasant for the students and prevent possible excuses for non-cooperation.

²⁵ Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion and Need for Further Research

The thesis showed the great need existing for a clearer policy of what is proper behavior in the public, Hebrew, and Sunday schools. The thesis proposed as a hypothesis the necessity of making the school curriculum need-fulfilling for the students in order to reduce discipline problems. Nevertheless, the thesis demands that the students cooperate with the teachers. In cases where students willfully disregard conventions of accepted classroom behavior, appropriate controls and punishment are recommended.

The thesis is substantiated by the history and philosophy of Judaism. The thesis is further developed by showing the effects of the sociological background of the family on the goals of the child attending Hebrew and Sunday school. Although Hebrew education is now considered a necessity, parents are not willing to have their children spend more than five to five-and-a-half hours a week for a period of four to five years in Hebrew school. At the same time, they wish their children to learn as much as possible.

Consequently, the problem of curricular planning is very important. There are two major procedures of teaching the Hebrew language, the mechanistic and the organic. The author and his associates have developed an eclectic approach that adopts the functional aspects of the organic approach, but maintains the mechanistic technique of the mechanistic approach. This eclectic approach achieved the highest scores and smallest deviations over a period of five years in five communities using experimental and control groups totalling 1480 students. Similarly, using the eclectic approach, students learned to read Hebrew faster and more fluently with the smallest deviation than the control groups. Thus, the first phase of the thesis, motivating the lesson and making it need-fulfilling and thus reducing discipline problems, is enabled by means of the eclectic approach.

The second phase of the thesis is the administering of punishment when the need demands. Again, the thesis proposes an eclectic position that encourages student inspired standards, but reserves the administering of punitive measures to the principal and teacher. The thesis proposes a demerit system with the withdrawal of school and home privileges as punishment. The thesis opposes detention room, busy-work, or physical punishment.

Another means of ensuring a cooperative attitude is by having the proper school atmosphere. This can be achieved by a clean well painted building and classroom. Consideration shown by teachers in maintaining proper light and temperature is very potent for encouraging a cooperative attitude on the part of the students. By observing these principles, discipline problems will be greatly reduced.

Though the author and his associates have devoted five years to the teaching of Hebrew and finding new means to solve old problems, many problems, nevertheless, remain unsolved. The dynamics of the classroom situation contain abstract factors that though unseen nevertheless affect the behavior in the classroom. The attitude of parents, siblings, family, and community help determine the attitudes, needs, and goals of the child. How can the external attitudes of the child's environment be controlled or influenced to work for the Hebrew school? What forms of public relations should be used to create a positive environmental background? How important is it for public relations purposes to have happy pupils? Does enforcing discipline have a negative effect on the children and their parents?

More time and effort have to be spent to answer many other related questions in the field of public relations and the enforcing of discipline. This subject is important for the administrator and teacher in the public as well as the religious schools.

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