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The purpose of education is to create a higher sense of the possible.
Norman Cousins, Human Options, 29

Appendix

Your At-a-Glance Guide to Key Peacemaking Processes in this Book

Creating a Peaceful Classroom (Description: page 5; Lesson: page 115)

In this section you will discover how to introduce peacemaking on the first day of school, laying a framework that will last all year long. "Our Peace Pledge" is included in this section.

Giving "I messages" (Description: page 15; Lesson: page 123)

"I messages" are simple declarative statements starting with "I" that express one's needs, concerns, or feelings. Find out how to teach and use this key element of effective communication and conflict resolution.

Introducing the Win/Win Guidelines (Description: page 14; Lessons: pages 119 and 121)

This six-step strategy will help your students (and you) resolve conflicts successfully. Thoroughly field tested and used internationally, the Win/Win Guidelines are an effective method for communication in conflicts of any kind.

Fostering Good Listening Skills (Description: page 22; Lesson: page 135)

Good listening is the basis for all effective communication. Listening enables children to learn better, have healthier relationships, and resolve conflicts. Find out how to teach these invaluable skills in this section.

Showcasing Conflict Resolution (Description: page 29)

Showcasing means mediating selected conflicts in front of the entire class to help kids gain practice in conflict resolution. See how showcasing is incorporated into a classroom setting.

How and When to Mediate (Description: page 31)

Learn what you need to do to mediate a conflict your students are engaged in. Find out when you should step in.

Calmness in the Classroom (Description: page 57)

Learn some simple but highly effective techniques that will help you and your students feel calm in and out of the classroom.

Integrating Writing and Peacemaking (Description: page 61)

Improve your children's writing as they learn to be peacemakers when you combine the writing process and peacemaking skills. Find out how.

Integrating Literature and Peacemaking (Description and lessons: page 87)

Eleven new lessons will help you motivate and reinforce peacemaking skills through works of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry.

Eleven Peacemaking Lessons at Your Fingertips: (page 115)

Lessons on conflict resolution, self-esteem, acceptance of differences, and others are included in this section.

Pacing Yourself

Before School Starts

- Set up a Work-it-Out spot in your classroom (Chapter 2, page 13).
- Hang "Peacemaker of the Week" bulletin board (page 41).
- Hang "Our Peace Pledge" (page 4).
- Practice "Breathing for Calmness" (page 58).
- Practice using "I messages" in your own life (page 15).
- Practice using the Win/Win Guidelines when you have a conflict (page 14).
- Choose at least two calmness techniques to do daily (pages 53–58).
- Buy some tapes with quiet music to keep in your classroom. Choose tapes you can play as background music when the children are writing. Select some peacemaking tapes recommended in the appendix.

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- Lesson: Creating a Peaceful Classroom (page 115).
- Lesson: Using "I messages" (page 123).
- Lesson: Resolving Conflicts: The Quick Method (page 119 or 121).
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- Lesson: Reflective Listening with Conflicts (page 135).
- Story: *The Secret of the Peaceful Warrior* (page 5).

Every Day All Year

- Morning Peace Pledge (page 4).
- Breathing for Calmness (page 58).
- Make sure students honor your Guidelines for a Peaceful Classroom (pages 5–8).
- Catch your students in the act of doing things right.
- Help students mediate their conflicts using Win/Win Guidelines (pages 29, 31).
- Reinforce good listening skills (page 22).
- Quiet writing time. Start each day with this.

At Least Every Week or Two All Year

- Review your Guidelines for a Peaceful Classroom (page 7).
- Review chart, "A Peacemaker is Someone Who. . . ." (page 12).
- Peacemaker of the Week (page 41).
- Follow up morning Peace Pledge by having students give examples of how they are being peacemakers (page 4). NOTE: Do the Peace Pledge daily at beginning of year.
- Peacemaking Journals (page 41).
- Peacemaking-related stories (pages 153–154).
- Cooperative group activities (example: page 37–41).

Call to Action

I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves, and, if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome direction, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education.

Thomas Jefferson

What gives hope its power is not the accumulation of demonstrable facts, but the release of human energies generated by the longing for something better.

Norman Cousins

Teachers have the power to shape lives. More than members of any other profession, teachers have the ability to affect the future—a tremendous honor and responsibility.

Do you realize that as teachers we spend more time with students than many of their parents do? Teachers provide children with life-altering skills and make a staggering impact. Now we must rise to the call of another need—the need for new basic skills that will help children survive into the third millennium.

Our country is reeling from an increase in violence that affects all communities, large and small, urban and suburban, rich and poor. In his groundbreaking book *Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman wrote, "As a society we have not bothered to make sure every child is taught the essentials of handling anger or resolving conflict positively—nor have we bothered to teach empathy, impulse control, or any of the other fundamentals of emotional competence" (286). Clearly, unless we teach children how to get along, everyone's future will be at risk.

The good news, however, is this: Things are slowly beginning to change. Teenagers in the South Bronx are learning to resolve differences nonviolently; kindergarten children in the suburbs are speaking "I messages"; and parents who attend peacemaking workshops are reinforcing peacemaking skills at home. More and more people are asking that peace and acceptance be taught in schools, not as an add-on to the curriculum, but as the foundation for success in all areas. In the words of Roger Johnson and David Johnson, "Teachers cannot teach and students cannot learn unless there is peace and order in the classroom."

Stephen O'Connor, author of *Will My Name Be Shouted Out*, said, "The single factor that most frustrates any teacher in reaching his or her goals is the relentless intrusion of social problems into the classroom" (Ayers, 23). Teachers can do little to rectify the devastating home lives many children endure; but we can provide another reality when children are in school, creating an environment where they feel safe, accepted, nurtured, and respected. In this environment children can be taught alternatives to the violence that surrounds all of us, helping them perceive hopeful options for their futures.

How do we begin? A hard question. I believe we have to start with the basics; but at this time, the "basics" are not what they used to be. The changing texture of our complex and violent society has given way to the need for what I call "the new basics," without which children will have little chance of succeeding socially, emotionally, or academically. And what elements can we designate as the new basics? I suggest the following:

The New Basics: What Children Need to Succeed

- sense of hope
- respect for self and others
- positive self-image
- the ability to work cooperatively
- a sense of empathy toward others
- anger management skills
- firm but fair consistent limits
- strategies for resolving conflicts nonviolently
- a sense of personal responsibility for one's behavior
- the knowledge that our actions make a difference to the world around us
- an understanding that violence in any form is not acceptable

How can teachers give these basics to children? By bringing peace education to every child in every classroom in every school throughout the country. You may ask, "What about parent involvement and community efforts to change things? The schools can't do it all." You're right, the schools can't do it all; but by teaching the skills of peacemaking, teachers will take a crucial role in shaping America's future.

Is the order too tall? Is it too late? Have things gotten so far out of hand they've become hopeless? I think not. Norman Cousins once said, "The starting point for a better world is the belief that it is possible" (*Human Options*, 51). As educators, we need so much to believe that our children *can* have a better world, and that change *is* possible. And whom does a better world start with? It starts with each of us.

The future of this society may well rest in the hands of teachers. We need to do whatever we can to reshape the current course of violence and divisiveness in our children's futures, one moment at a time, one child at a time. Can we do it? I believe we can, one teacher at a time.

Using This Book

Human existence cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but only true words, with which men and women transform the world.

Paulo Friere

The work of transformation goes on at many levels: in the halls of government, in the framing of public policy, in the minds of poets, in the eyes of artists, and in the classrooms where we teach. Teaching is by nature a transforming experience. By schooling the minds of children, we shape the future.

It is my hope that this book will be another tool for transformation, enabling you to bring new skills, concepts, and understandings into your classroom. And as you do so, share what you discover with colleagues. Don't allow new insights to remain within the walls of your own room. Encourage yourself to be another conduit for change, bringing new understandings to the parents of your students, your professional colleagues, your administrators, and your community. What takes place in your classroom can provide scaffolding for people who are uninitiated into the skills of peacemaking. Open your doors; share what you learn.

This book has been designed to support you in teaching and sharing many different peacemaking skills. The classroom anecdotes and strategies described on these pages will enable you to begin creating a peaceful classroom from the first day of school, extending it throughout the entire year. And the research woven through each chapter will give you plenty of data to share with those who may need convincing that peacemaking should be a key component of the curriculum.

Although most of the students described in *The Peaceful Classroom in Action* are second graders, much of the material in this book has been used in elementary classrooms throughout the United States and other countries, from kindergarten through sixth grade, in regular classes as well as special education, in urban as well as suburban schools. It is highly adaptable and intended to be modified for your particular age group. So feel free to reshape these strategies and make them your own. If you believe a certain activity won't work with your group, change it to fit the needs of your students, your grade level. Remember, this book is about change; so try to embrace the process of change as you use it.

NOTE: If you haven't already read *Learning the Skills of Peacemaking* from the same author and publisher, you are encouraged to do so. It will give you a solid foundation for the teaching of peacemaking and will provide many lessons to supplement the ones in this book.

The Peaceful Classroom in Action is in three sections:

Part I	Creating a Peaceful Classroom
Part II	Integrating Writing and Peacemaking
Part III	Integrating Literature and Peacemaking: A Primary Unit

Children's literature is used extensively in each section of this book. Many of the lessons you are about to read incorporate children's books that elucidate and reinforce peacemaking concepts. Children identify with story characters, empathizing, solving problems, perceiving outcomes, and vicariously putting into practice their knowledge of peacemaking skills. Each time children help a story character resolve a conflict, they engage in a form of mental rehearsal for similar situations that may arise in their own lives. Stories also help children deal with emotional issues that may hamper positive relationships. You'll see how literature is used to inform, support, and enlighten children on many levels.

Part I, Creating a Peaceful Classroom, shows specifically how to bring peacemaking into your classroom at the beginning of the year and how to integrate, reinforce and extend it as the year goes on. Particular attention is given to the first month of school, the time when the foundation is set. Among the many lessons and anecdotes in this section are "Creating a Peaceful Classroom," "Introducing the Win/Win Guidelines," and "Showcasing Conflict Resolution," initially presented in *Learning the Skills of Peacemaking*. For your convenience, copies of the original lessons appear in the Appendix.

You will also find examples of children applying peacemaking skills and understandings as they learn math, science, and reading. Many of these anecdotes highlight collaborative learning, which fosters key elements of the peacemaking process: sharing, negotiating, empathizing and compromising.

Part II, Integrating Writing and Peacemaking, highlights the link between these areas, showing how one process reinforces and supports the other. How to integrate the two is illustrated through the writing samples and conversations of my second grade students, showing how they developed both as writers and peacemakers.

All activities in this section are easily adaptable to various grade levels.

Among the topics the children speak and write about are, "How I am a Peacemaker," "Dealing with Prejudice," "Working Out Conflicts," and "Why Peacemaking is Important."

Part III, Integrating Literature and Peacemaking: A Primary Unit, contains eleven lessons that reinforce key peacemaking concepts, including caring for the world around us, solving problems, accepting differences, taking personal responsibility for one's actions, confronting racism, and resolving conflicts. A variety of literature is used, ranging from fiction to poetry to biography. The unit culminates in a Peace Day Celebration, a multifaceted activity that pulls together the overarching concepts taught throughout the unit.

Lessons 5, 8, 9, 10, and 11 of the unit are appropriate for the upper elementary grades as well as primary grades. In the Appendix are six lessons from *Learning the Skills of Peacemaking* and five new lessons that relate to content throughout the book. Many of these lessons are appropriate for Grades 2 through 6, and several can be used at all grade levels. Each lesson in the Appendix shows at the top of the page the grade levels it's intended for.

"When will I ever find time to teach more lessons?" you may be asking yourself right now (as I do whenever I hear about something new to teach). You will find that you can easily integrate lessons in this book into your weekly schedules. I always regard peacemaking as my social studies unit for the fall. Many teachers use peacemaking as their language arts lesson for the day. Each lesson has been designed to tie in to objectives in either social studies, language arts, or health (self-esteem, communication, getting along with others). I suggest that you start the year with lessons in the Appendix (pages 115–144), beginning with "Creating a Peaceful Classroom" and then following the sequence of lessons as they are arranged. Save the Primary Unit for mid-year

as a means of reinforcement. *Most importantly, be sure to think, act, and speak peacemaking every day of the school year. Your being a living model is the most powerful way to make peacemaking come alive for your students.*

As you use this book, go back and forth between the sections, interweaving concepts and strategies. The "Pacing Yourself" section (xi) will help you do this. Also, on page x is an "At-a-Glance Guide to the Key Peacemaking Concepts in This Book," designed for easy reference.

There is a little gift for you in Part I. It's a chapter called "Taking Care of Ourselves." Teaching peacemaking to children starts with each of us. We teach peace effectively only when we have the actual experience of it in our own lives. After all, we are the people our children look to for validation of the ideals and concepts we bring to them.

Through this chapter you will discover techniques and insights that can bring greater peace to your life. It's a huge challenge to live with all the demands of a teaching career and family and still find a way to feel peaceful inside. Teachers not only deal with the ever-growing pressures of work; we also have homes, children, bills, laundry, food shopping, and a multitude of other responsibilities that must be constantly juggled. This chapter will enable you to create a greater sense of harmony, balance, and well-being in spite of all the pressures. As you read it, put up your feet and relax; and be sure to do something nurturing for yourself before the day ends.

May *The Peaceful Classroom in Action* bring positive changes to you, to your students, to your school, and and to the world at large. Peace to all of you.

Introduction

A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.

Henry Adams

Peace is a never-ending process that demands constant attention and absolute commitment, but the rewards are great.

From Starting Small

Since writing *Learning the Skills of Peacemaking*, I have returned to the classroom and have been teaching peacemaking to children and leading workshops for educators and parents. Along with insights gained from the many workshop participants I have met around the country, my students have been my most valuable teachers. They've led me to a deeper understanding of the application of peacemaking skills to many aspects of living and learning. Through this book I share my understandings of these applications, extending an invitation for you to step into my classroom through the pages of my journal and see how these skills are applied across the curriculum.

In *Learning the Skills of Peacemaking,* peacemaking skills are defined as follows:

- acceptance of self and others
- demonstration of respect for others
- cooperation
- conflict resolution
- personal responsibility for one's actions
- a sense of connection to and responsibility toward the larger world

The original 1985 field study for *Learning the Skills of Peacemaking* showed not only that children can learn to resolve conflicts, but also that when they do so, their self-esteem increases.

Since my return to teaching, I have felt the need to observe children more closely, noting subtle changes in them when peacemaking is woven into the fabric of each day. I have seen that the hearts of young children, not yet hardened by the ways of the world, are open and ready to absorb lessons in peace. There is little to unlearn when a child is young.

Over the past two years, I have closely watched my students in the process of learning and socializing, following them around with my journal as they engaged in math, reading, language arts, social studies, and science activities, and participated in collaborative projects. During school I would quickly jot down the children's conversations, noting the way they interacted with one another; and at the end of the day, when the room was finally quiet, I would sit at my desk digesting the notes I had taken, reflecting on what I had seen. Through this book I ask you to join me in the classroom seeing what I saw, learning what I learned.

A source of deep insight was the children's writing, which revealed much about their thoughts, feelings, and attitudes. *In Social Worlds of Children Learning to Write*, Anne Haas Dyson said, ". . .the intertextual universe of the classroom itself attains sociocultural depth,

as diverse genres, diverse cultural traditions, mingle on the classroom stage, giving rise to new possibilities, new speculations, new styles" (216). Dyson believed that when children are given the freedom to express themselves in language that is fully their own, a sociocultural depth comes to the classroom and possibilities for even greater self-expression emerge. In the safe environment of our peaceful classroom, children's minds thrived, hearts opened, and words flowed. Part II of this book focuses on this process and the clear link between writing and peacemaking.

My colleagues were enormously helpful to me in formulating new insights. Often, our conversations would deepen my awareness and help me gain new perceptions that might not have otherwise crystalized. In *The Art of Classroom Inquiry,* Lee Odell said, "Exploration leads to further exploration, discovery to still further discovery" (Hubbard, *Power* xv). New understandings developed and new questions took shape through interactions with colleagues. As you begin to teach the skills of peacemaking, partner with a colleague who also is teaching peacemaking. You'll need to support each other as you journey through some unfamiliar terrain, exploring questions, discussing problems, and sharing successes. It's always better to travel a new path with a trusted partner.

Through my own process of continued observation, reflection, and sharing, I came to know my students of the past two years far better than any I'd taught in the previous eighteen years. The children you will meet in this book are representative of many others across the country, being of varied ethnic, sociocultural, and economic backgrounds, with a wide variety of learning abilities and differing family backgrounds. Many of my students had emotional challenges that surfaced through their writing and conversations; their courage to open up was a contribution to the tenor of the class. The safety, acceptance, and compassion of the peaceful classroom made their deep sharing possible.

As you teach peacemaking to your students, living these skills and attitudes in your own life is essential. By doing so, you will be far better able to model what you teach authentically—and authenticity is key. We need to teach children to do what we do, not just what we say.

It's also important to weave the skills and concepts of peacemaking into other areas of the curriculum as a process and as a vehicle for learning. When we do so, our students grow socially and emotionally, as well as academically. As the peaceful classroom takes root and grows, we begin to see that its homeostasis is achieved by each person's continuous investment in the well-being of others. A growing sense of interdependence then begins to flourish. The learning community is firmly established as a growing dynamic organism. Change takes root.

The process of peacemaking is exactly that—process. This book is not a simple "how-to," promising a peaceful classroom in thirty days if you follow its directions. The true meaning of this book will only be revealed to you as you live the concepts within it. To explain better what I mean, I must share the words of one of my editors, Tamera Bryant, who so beautifully framed her deep understanding of this idea in a letter to me:

> . . . the peaceful classroom is never a product, certainly not a finished product. It's a living, breathing organism that's always evolving and changing with each glimpse or grasping of a new insight or a deepened understanding.

No one can read this book simply for information. Although it's filled with facts, none of them working alone will help. The only way to learn from this book is to practice it. The only way to believe it is to do it. The only way to feel its effects is to live it. When teachers do that, this book will take on a whole new life. Layers of meaning will pile up everywhere.

May this book enable greater numbers of us to live the skills of peacemaking, and in doing so, imbue our students with its essence, so that together we may contribute the possibility of peace for all people.

PART *One*

Creating a Peaceful Classroom

It Starts with You

Let the eyes
inside your heart
see into the hearts
of others.

Realize
they have the need
to be accepted
just like you.

Let them see you care,
open up your mind,
treat them with respect,
show that you're a friend.

When you do this
you will find
others treating
you the same,

opening their eyes
to look inside your heart
returning the respect
you have given them.

And one by one
the world will change;
a brighter sun
will start to rise,

reminding us
that peace for all
is rooted in
the things we do.

—Naomi Drew

CHAPTER *One*

The First Day of School

Great ideas come into the world as gently as doves. Perhaps, then, if we listen attentively, we shall hear, amid the uproar of empires and nations, the faint flutter of wings, the gentle stirrings of life and hope. Some will say that this hope lies in a nation: others in a man. I believe, rather that it is awakened, revived, nourished by millions of solitary individuals whose deeds and works every day negate frontiers and the crudest implications of history.

Albert Camus

Starting with Ourselves

I believe teachers are those people Camus wrote about, the millions of solitary individuals whose deeds and works every day "negate the crudest implications of history." I see it in my school, a school committed to peacemaking. I see it in the peace pledges lining the halls, the peer mediators walking through the building with their shiny Peer Mediator buttons, and the Win/Win Guidelines for resolving conflicts posted in every room. These signs are all symbols of hope, counter to the tide of youth violence and discord sweeping over our society in the past two decades. I have hope when I think of schools like mine throughout the country that are helping to reverse this tide. "As gently as doves" the language of peace is beginning to enter the vocabulary of more children, more teachers, more families throughout the country. You are now becoming part of this.

In this chapter you will find specific ways to bring the language and actions of peacemaking to your students. By teaching peaceful alternatives to conflict and practical strategies for getting along with others, you will transform your classroom into a laboratory for positive social change.

It's essential to start the school year with an immediate saturation of peacemaking skills. If you are reading this book mid-year, though, don't wait. Start now. The sooner we begin, the more likely our chances for success. Each moment of delay in teaching peacemaking skills is an opportunity lost, shaded by the possibility that children's negative attitudes and behaviors may start to take root. Often we need to undo the damage of past years. As children grow older they accumulate more and more unacceptable behaviors and attitudes. Put-downs become cool, violence exciting, racial divisions more likely as the years go on.

By the time they reach middle school, children begin to separate into ethnically defined groups. In my school district, which is racially and culturally mixed, the children who played together happily in elementary school splinter into race-defined cliques in junior high and high school.

Peacemaking has the potential for altering this pattern; and when it is modeled, taught, and reinforced year after year throughout an entire school, its impact is maximized. The younger children are when they start learning these skills, the greater the possibilities.

Laying the groundwork for peacemaking—carefully, deliberately, thoroughly at the beginning of the year will provide the best chance for a successful program that can last all year. The first day of school is the pivotal moment, the time for laying the foundation of positive behaviors for the entire year.

Modeling

By being peaceful ourselves and by modeling peacemaking, teachers can create an atmosphere of peacefulness that extends to those around us. The Dalai Lama talked about "love, compassion, and altruism" as the fundamentals of peace: "Once these qualities are developed within an individual, he or she is then able to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony" (Hanh, vii). So it is in the classroom. As teachers we must begin modeling love, compassion, and altruism (along with firm but fair limits) the minute the children walk through the door.

You may ask, "How can I model peacefulness when I so often feel stressed and rushed?" This predicament is our greatest daily challenge. Since the fast-paced world robs us of inner peace, we need to find peace through daily practices like those discussed in Chapter 5. In fact, I suggest that you read Chapter 5 as soon as you finish this chapter. Begin bringing a greater degree of peacefulness to yourself without delay.

And Now, for the Children

Our Peace Pledge

We pledge to be peacemakers at all times, to treat others with respect and to live by the Golden Rule.

Starting the morning with a simple pledge like this one sets the tone for the entire day. It's a continual reminder of the mindset we hope each child will absorb. I spend a lot of time on the first day of school talking about the meaning of this pledge and the responsibility each of us has to living its message in school, at home, on the playground, and all other places. As time goes on, I develop a morning ritual around this pledge by having the children take a few moments after its recitation to reflect upon ways they have been peacemakers during the previous day and sharing their progress with the rest of the class.

You can design a peace pledge that's just right for your class and your school; or you can have the children write one, as my students did. One of the most effective schools I've visited—one that's been recognized repeatedly for its work in peacemaking—has every one of its classes start the day with a peace pledge that stresses personal responsibility.

Starting the day with a peace pledge sends students a powerful message: Peacemaking is so valued in this school that we designate time each morning to express our commitment to it. Throughout each day each person is expected to live the words of the pledge.

A Story To Start The Year

A wonderful book to read on the first day of school that helps set the tone for peace, respect, and personal responsibility is *The Secret of the Peaceful Warrior* by Dan Millman. This book brings the concept of peacemaking to life, enabling children to see positive choices that can be made when one is faced with conflict. It helps children see the importance of finding solutions, accepting differences, and working out conflicts through words, not physical actions.

The main character in *The Secret of the Peaceful Warrior*, a boy named Danny, is threatened by the school bully. First Danny tries to hide from the bully, but he knows he can't continue to do so indefinitely. Through a series of events, Danny comes to befriend a wise old character named Socrates who teaches him a very important lesson: We can defend ourselves by standing tall, being brave, and speaking assertively, rather than fighting. When Danny learns this lesson, he's able to confront the bully, gaining his respect and ultimately his friendship. This story provides a valuable framework for the peacemaking skills you'll teach all year long.

Creating a Peaceful Classroom

> *Using one's imagination can be very empowering. We can help children not only to envision a hopeful future, but also to create their own personal imagery as a tool for coping with change.* Perspectives

When I began planning *Learning the Skills of Peacemaking*, I learned how necessary it is to help children create their own visions of a peaceful classroom. We can achieve only that which we are able to envision, the dream being the starting point for reality. Children need to be trained to see alternatives. This in mind, I developed a lesson called "Creating a Peaceful Classroom," which enables teachers and children to conjure an image of what a peaceful classroom looks like. Only when a peaceful classroom is clear in the imagination can one begin to name the qualities of such an environment. Then guidelines can be developed for making the vision real. Take a peek inside my classroom to see how this worked.

Journal Entry: September 9

"Boys and girls it means so much to me that we work together like a family this year, showing respect toward one another, speaking with kindness, and having our classroom be a place where everybody feels safe and cared for. We'll be spending so much time together all year long, and I

know if we work together as peacemakers we can make our classroom a very special place to be. What do you think of that idea?" A chorus of agreement moved through the room.

"Let's take a moment to picture what a peaceful classroom would look and feel like. It helps me if it's very quiet when I have something important to think about. The quietness helps me concentrate. Sometimes I even close my eyes so I can focus on my thoughts without any distractions. Have you ever done that?"

Allison's hand shot up. "Sometimes when I close my eyes and think about a place I've gone to—like Disneyworld—I can see it all over again."

Matthew added, "Sometimes when I'm getting ready to write in my journal, I close my eyes and think. It helps me get ideas."

"Me too," I added. "Sometimes when I write and I'm trying to think real hard, I close my eyes or cover them with my hand. It helps me think, and then I get new ideas. Would you like to try it? You can either close your eyes or look down at the floor; but before we start let's take a few slow, deep breaths and get calm inside."

"I'm going to stop talking for a few moments to give you time to think about what a truly peaceful classroom would look and feel like. As you're thinking, I want you to picture how people would treat each other, how they would work and play together, and how you would feel being in a classroom that's always peaceful. Now take another deep breath down to the bottom of your stomach and let it out through your mouth. Again, breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Let your stomach expand as though it's a beach ball. Let your body relax. I'm going to stop talking to give you time to imagine our classroom as the most peaceful place you can think of."

The room became very quiet, and I, too, pictured how I wanted our classroom to be this year. I imagined the room bustling with activity—voices enthusiastic, yet calm. I thought about conversations reflecting a sense of trust and acceptance, conflicts being resolved as they arose, and the children totally engaged in learning. The days flowed; harmony prevailed. I didn't have to stop continuously to remind children to stay on task or cooperate. It happened naturally because calmness and harmony were inherent in the way we functioned together.

But what about my hyperactive children? The voice of doubt entered my head with a heavy thud. How could this idea possibly work when so many children had special needs? I thought of Ben and Terrence with their history of fighting. How could I help them become peacemakers when their entire school background countered it? Then I thought about all the children I've taught who were won over to peacemaking in spite of the odds, and the voice of doubt subsided. I decided I would not "buy in" to any child's history. Their histories would begin anew in this class.

After a minute or two of complete silence, I asked the children to share with a partner what they had envisioned. Following several minutes of animated paired sharing, the children were ready to share their visions of a peaceful classroom with the entire group. Arjay began, "I pictured all of us being nice to each other." (Nice. Young children love the word "nice.")

"Arjay, what do you mean by 'nice'?" I asked, and met with a blank stare. Gradually a few hands went up.

Allison said, "Nice is when people treat you the way you want to be treated."

"You mean like the Golden Rule?" I asked.

"Yeah, like the Golden Rule," said Allison. "If you're kind to other people, they'll be kind to you."

"Just like what we learned in *The Secret of the Peaceful Warrior*," Matthew chimed in.

Taryn added, "When Danny was kind to the bully, the bully started to treat him kindly back."

"That's right," I said. "It usually works that way. Even though people may seem different on the outside, like the bully seemed to Danny, everyone has feelings inside; and we all have a heart. When we can put our differences aside and treat others with respect, they often begin to treat us the same way."

"What do you mean, 'different on the outside'?" asked Terrence.

A perfect entree into the issue of diversity, I thought. "Terrence, your skin is brown and my skin is tan. I'm a female and you're a male; I'm big and you're little. We're different on the outside. But we're both human beings, and we both have feelings. We want the same things: to be treated with kindness and respect, right?"

"Right," said Terrence "Hey, Arjay has gold skin."

"I have brown skin like you," Billy said, turning to Terrence.

"I have pinkish skin with freckles," Allison joined in. Soon the children were holding up their arms and comparing each other's skin tones, then hair colors, eye colors, and heights. After the discussion went on awhile, I said, "Sometimes when people don't know about peacemaking, they treat others in a mean way because they're different on the outside."

"That's crazy," said Amanda, " 'cause inside we're really the same."

"It **is** crazy, Amanda," I said, "but sometimes people need to be reminded that we're all the same inside. By your remembering it, you can set a positive example for others in and out of school."

"What else did you think about when you pictured having a peaceful classroom ?"

The children's hands shot up, and they talked about the many qualities they had imagined a peaceful classroom would have. As they spoke, I listed each quality on a chart, as shown below.

A Peaceful Classroom Looks Like This

- People are kind to each other.
- We don't use put-downs.
- People speak in kind voices, not yelling voices.
- People don't hurt each other.
- People care about each other.
- We use our manners.
- We feel safe here.

"What about if people get into conflicts?" I asked.

"What's a conflict; I forgot?" asked Justin.

I wrote the word "conflict" on the board and repeated what I had said during the reading of *The Secret of the Peaceful Warrior*. "A conflict is a fight or disagreement. People get into conflicts all the time; it's just part of being human. The thing that's bad about conflicts is that people often don't handle them in a peaceful way. A lot of people hit, or yell, or call one another names when involved in a conflict. What else can you do if you get into a conflict?"

"Talk it out," said Amanda.

"Use your words and not your fists," added Caitlin.

"Ask for help," said Hannah.

"That's right!" I said adding to our chart, "People work out conflicts using their words."

After completing the list of qualities, I said, "Now, let's think of some guidelines we can follow every day so we can have a peaceful classroom throughout the year." The children and I looked at the chart we had just created, this time thinking about the steps each person could take to make a peaceful classroom a reality. Gradually, this list emerged.

To Have a Peaceful Classroom

We Agree To Do the Following:

- Treat each other with kindness and respect.
- Not fight.
- Work out our conflicts with words, not fists.
- Stop conflicts before they even start
- Respect each other's things.
- Include each other when we play.
- Share.
- Not use put-downs.
- Always remember that we are all the same inside even if we **look different on the outside.**

When the chart of guidelines was complete, I asked the children if they'd each commit to being responsible for abiding by these guidelines. We talked about the meaning of responsibility and how each person makes a difference in the tenor of a class. I then asked every child to sign the chart, calling it "our contract." I added, "When you sign a contract, you are giving your word of honor that you will do everything in your power to follow what we agreed to. Do you think you can do that?" One by one each child stepped forward, picked up a colored marker and signed the contract.

I laminated the guidelines and displayed them in the most prominent place in the room, reviewing them frequently and introducing them to each new child who entered the class. The children's parents were introduced to our guidelines on Back-To-School Night.

Reflections

We covered a lot of ground in this lesson, focusing on qualities that foster a peaceful classroom, then looking at the issue of personal responsibility, acceptance of differences, and the importance of working out conflicts. The idea I brought home again and again was this: A peaceful classroom is one in which people feel safe, respected, and cared for. Perhaps more important to the children was the overriding message that their input was crucial to the creation of a peaceful classroom.

This lesson was one of many early steps toward building an "atmosphere of thinking, discussing, and problem solving" that William Glasser referred to in *Schools Without Failure*. He believes this kind of atmosphere leads children to be more independent and socially adept, saying, "Children can learn that their peers care about them. They learn to solve the problems of their world" (131). Imagine the implications for the future.

Along with many teachers across the country, I have found this particular lesson to be highly effective in setting the tone for a peaceful classroom throughout the year. As one teacher said, "When you involve the children right from the start, it's different from just giving them rules. You engage their thinking and allow them to take greater ownership. That's why this strategy works."

Insights on the First Day of School

Flannery O'Connor said, "A story is a way to say something that can't be said any other way." Stories have the power to lead us toward knowledge and insight. For this reason I chose to introduce peacemaking concepts through a story rather than a didactic discussion. *The Secret of the Peaceful Warrior* has strong enough characterization and narrative to sweep the children into Danny's plight, enabling them to identify with his problem and share in the satisfaction of his solution.

The philosopher Jacques Barzun talked about the power of stories: "The best literature . . . carries us back to reality" (qtd. in Kilpatrick, 137). This concept is extended in the book *Why Johnny Can't Tell Right From Wrong*, which assures us that good literature helps develop morality.

> It involves us in the detail and particularity of other lives. And unlike the superficial encounters of the workaday world, a book shows us what other lives are like from the inside. Moral principles also take on a reality in stories that they lack in purely logical form. Stories restrain our tendency to indulge in abstract speculation about ethics. They make it a little harder for us to reduce people to factors in an equation. (137)

The children's strong identification with Danny helped them assimilate the same lessons in peacemaking that Danny did. Danny's plight became their own, as did his newly found insights. Literature is a powerful tool for teaching values to children. This topic is discussed further in Part III.

The Secret of the Peaceful Warrior was one of many vehicles used to suffuse my class with peacemaking on the first day of school. My purpose for such intense coverage was threefold:

- I wanted to build a scaffold for excellent behavior.
- I wanted to lay the groundwork for academic achievement by creating an atmosphere of trust, respect, and calmness.
- I wanted to create a framework for the children's thinking that included the following beliefs:
  - Class is built on mutual respect.
  - People can make positive choices in the face of conflict.
  - Fighting is not one of the better choices.
  - Each person is special and worthy of being treated with dignity.
  - Our actions make a difference.

The transformational work of peacemaking now begun, we can look ahead to a year of enhanced learning and better relationships. We can look to the future and see possibility.

Research on the Academic Impact of Peacemaking

The process of peacemaking has the potential to affect children's academic performance. Roger Johnson and David Johnson have done extensive research on peacemaking and its effect on children's learning and behavior, finding that when we teach our children how to get along, accept differences, and resolve conflicts, they learn better. Roger Johnson introduced this idea in *Educational Leadership* in 1992: "Students who know how to manage their own behavior have a developmental advantage over those who don't" (11).

Johnson and Johnson conducted the most comprehensive study to date on how peacemaking influences children's attitudes, behaviors, and academic achievement. In *Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Programs in Elementary and Secondary Schools: A Review of the Research*, the researchers cited various studies supporting their 1992 claim. In fact, in a 1995 study co-conducted with Stevahn and Real, Johnson and Johnson found a link between academic achievement and the teaching of peacemaking (specifically, conflict resolution and cooperative learning). In that study, seventh and eighth graders were assigned to cooperative groups where they learned conflict resolution skills prior to the administration of an achievement test. This group was compared to other seventh and eighth graders who had either no training or less comprehensive training. "The highest achievements on both a posttest and a retention test were found in the cooperative learning/conflict training condition . . . " (47). Johnson and Johnson also found a link between integrating the teaching of peacemaking skills in subject areas and increased achievement, which is encouraging. "There is also evidence that the integration and the learning of the conflict resolution and peer mediation procedures can increase students' academic achievement " (46). Conversely, a study by Berndt and Keefe (1992) showed that "increases in conflict between friends longitudinally predict detachment from school and lower grades" (46). From three separate studies, Johnson and Johnson concluded that conflict resolution integrated into academic units and combined with cooperative learning can increase achievement. (47)

While I am encouraged by these findings, I am not surprised. Without exception, during my twenty years of teaching, I have found that peacemaking enhances the arena for learning. It happens for two main reasons. The first reason: More time is freed up for teaching, and less time is spent on discipline. Incidences of conflict diminish, positive peer relationships thrive, and an atmosphere of safety develops. Then, the second reason: Children learn better in an atmosphere of safety. When they feel safe, supported, and accepted they can focus better on the task

of learning. Unencumbered by petty conflicts and the hostility of others, children can engage in learning as a joyful process, one that's vital, exciting, alive.

Think about yourself. Don't you function better when you're among friendly, caring, accepting people? Imagine creating an atmosphere in your classroom where this is the standard. How much more learning could take place! Remember, as well, that we are shaping minds not only so that children can succeed in school but so that they can succeed in *life*.

CHAPTER *Two*

The First Week of School

While schools teach math, reading, social studies, and science, perhaps the most important thing for students to learn is how to interact effectively and peacefully with each other and the world at large.

—Roger Johnson and David Johnson

The vision of community that the classroom provides can color a child's ideas and expectations about equity, cooperation and citizenship for a lifetime.

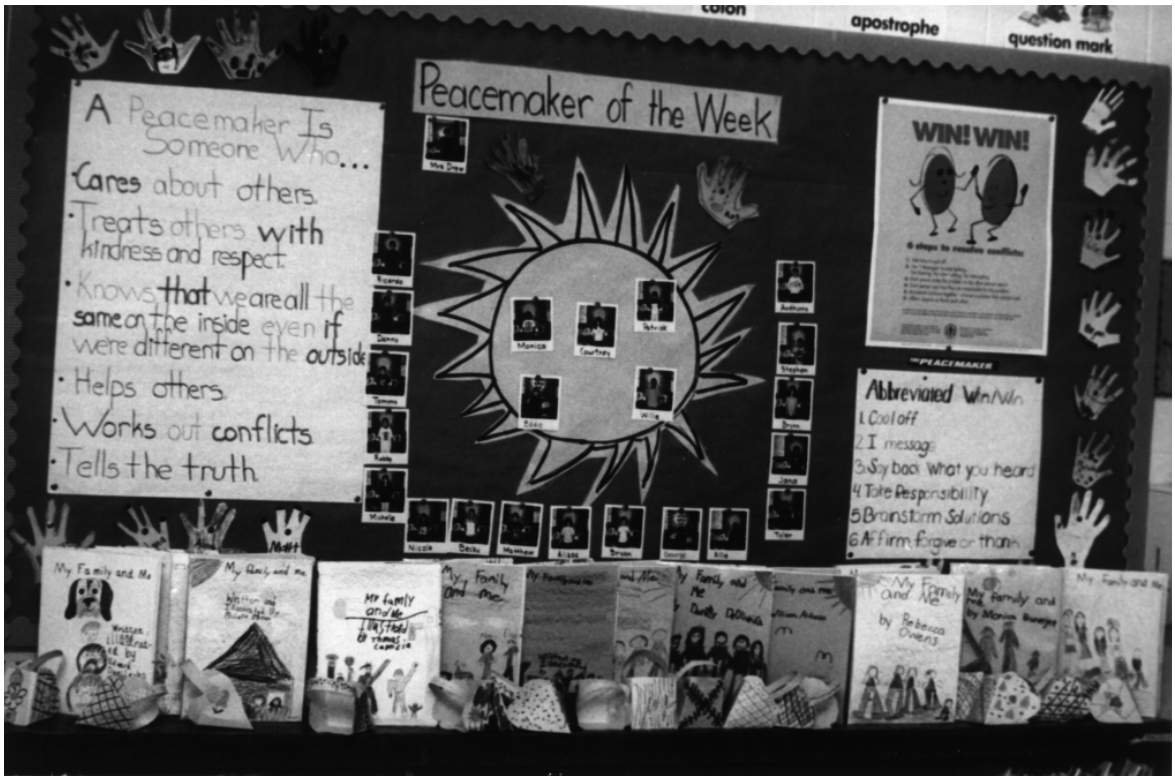
—Jim Carnes

Creating a Caring Environment

Environmental factors are very important in creating a peaceful classroom. The posters, visuals, and bulletin boards that adorn your walls; the way furniture is arranged (Is it conducive to group interaction and shared learning?); accessibility of materials to the children; brightness and color—all of these help set the tone. In this chapter you're invited into my classroom (entering through the pages of my journal) to see how the physical environment is created. Next we'll look at a lesson introducing the Win/Win Guidelines through puppets. Lastly, we'll talk about the importance of setting ethical standards, having high expectations, offering affirmation, and fostering good listening skills as foundational elements of the peaceful classroom.

Journal Entry: September. 10, 8:45 a.m.

The first day of school passed quickly! One student commented that it felt good to be in our classroom. I realize that aside from the peacemaking activities, the physical space of this room is inviting. I look around at the three parallel tables at the center of the room and the bright yellow name tags decorated with stickers. There's plenty of space at the front and back of the room for the children to sit on the carpet for class discussions and cooperative groups. Every wall is covered with signs, pictures, posters, and quotations. Wanting to make the children feel special right away, I hung this poem (page 12) on the easel to read with them over and over.



Being Human is Being Special

I look in the mirror,

and who do I see?
My very own person
who looks just like me!
I look at my eyes,
I look at my face,
knowing that no one
on earth or in space,
is quite like I am,
one of a kind.
My body is special
and so is my mind.

Each person alive
has something special to give.
We each make a difference
each day that we live.
I love myself,
and I love others too.
The world is a special place
'cause it has me and you.

—Naomi Drew

On the front chalkboard is a large chart on which I drew a giant heart for the children to write their names on. At the top of the paper are the words, "Welcome, My Peacemakers." One of the children gave me that idea. Wanting to get the students motivated over the summer, I wrote a letter to all of them expressing my excitement about their coming to second grade, and my own experiences when I started second grade at age seven. I also invited some of the children who lived near the school to come in and help set up the room. Mary Lynn and Alyssia were able to come, and Mary Lynn asked if she could bring Chris, her big brother, and Sheena, her big sister. Alyssia brought her little sister, Amanda, as well.

We worked together setting up interest centers in the room: blocks, math, science, reading, and computers. After working with the younger children and me for three days, Sheena came in with a stack of bulletin board ideas, all related to peacemaking. "Mrs. Drew, here are some ideas to get the year started. I hope you like them," she said

expectantly. Her "Welcome, My Peacemakers" idea was the best.

The kids also helped hang our Peacemaker of the Week bulletin board (shown on page 12) at the back of the room. This display will stay up all year, a permanent acknowledgement of the children's best efforts at peacemaking. Today I'm going to take snapshots of everyone in the class to put around the perimeter of the bulletin board. On alternating Fridays we—the children and I—will select those students who've most consistently exhibited peacemaking qualities, and their pictures will go in a large yellow "sunshine" at the center of this bulletin board. What qualities are we looking for? Qualities are listed on a chart to the left of the photographs.

A Peacemaker Is Someone Who . . .

- Cares about others.
- Treats people with kindness and respect
- Helps others.
- Works out conflicts without fighting.
- Is a good listener.
- Tells the truth.
- Knows that people are the same on the inside even if we look different on the outside.

On the right of the children's pictures are the Win/Win Guidelines, a six-step strategy for resolving conflicts (see page 14). I'll introduce the Win/Win Guidelines this morning so the children will know how to work out conflicts right away.

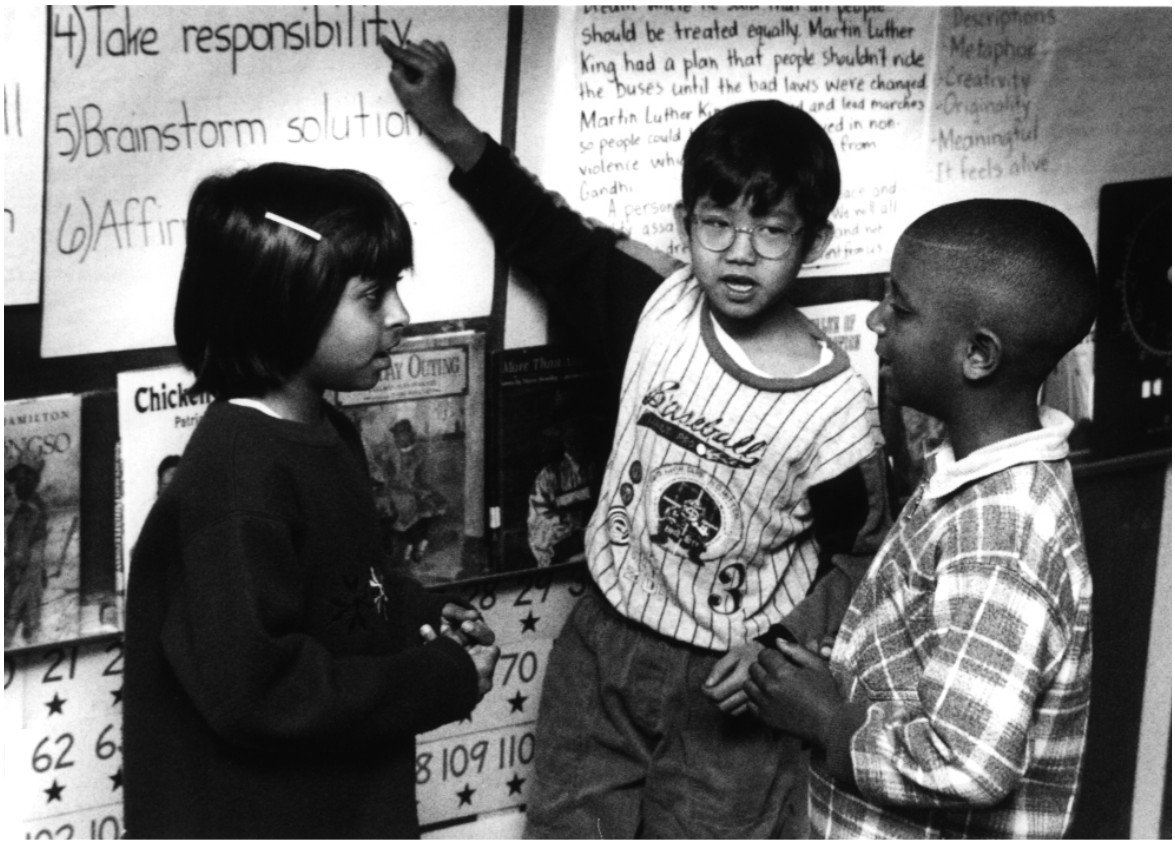
In the back corner where our classroom library is set up, there's a small white table with green chairs. A teddy bear sits in one of those chairs, always ready to give up the seat to a child with a problem to negotiate. This is our Work-it-Out spot, a place where any child can sit down to resolve problems with a peer. Another copy of the Win/Win Guidelines is posted in this corner, with the intention that many conflicts will be resolved here.

The kids will come in soon. Let's see, what do I most want to focus on today? Respect, creating good listening skills, and acknowledgment of positive behaviors. Also, fun, can't forget about fun. I want them to love being here, and I want to feel the same way.

Reflections

How deliberate we have to be about moving toward our goal of creating a peaceful classroom; it doesn't just happen of its own accord. In *Teaching Tolerance* magazine, one elementary teacher said, "We can't just assume children know how to work together. Cooperative skills are something we have to teach" (59). In the twenty years that I've taught, I have found that statement to be true. Like all human beings, our children have within them the seeds of peace. It's up to us, their teachers and parents, to nurture those seeds and help them grow. Creating a caring learning environment through the physical elements of a classroom is an important part of this process.

What if you have extremely limited space? Fear not, you can still adorn your walls with peacemaking-related posters, pictures and quotations. On a limited budget? Have your students create their own drawings, posters, and poems. Find related quotations in this book and others. Copy them onto large paper and have your students decorate them. The most important thing is that your room, no matter how large or small, reflect care, acceptance, and harmony. It should be a welcoming place that also feels safe and stimulating to children. Most of all, it should feel peaceful. Ask yourself this question: "Does my room give me a feeling of peacefulness and excitement for learning when I walk in?" If the answer is no, make some changes. When a teacher I know decided to decorate each station in her computer lab with posters, stuffed animals, and figurines, her room came alive. What can you do to make your room the warmest, most welcoming place imaginable?



Introducing the Win/Win Guidelines

. . . there are impartial, fair ways to settle pint-size disputes, while the deeper teaching is that disputes can be negotiated. Daniel Goleman

The Win/Win Guidelines

1. Take time to cool off.
2. Each person gives an "I message," stating feelings about a problem. No put-downs, blaming or name-calling.
3. Each person states the problem as the other person sees it, reflecting what they have heard.
4. Each person takes responsibility for his or her role in the problem.
5. Brainstorm solutions together and choose a solution that satisfies both people, a win/win solution.
6. Affirm, forgive, or thank each other.

This strategy is currently used in elementary, middle, and high schools around the country with huge success. As one teacher said, "When children are taught how to handle their conflicts, The Win/Win Guidelines alleviate their need to fight." This teacher's words mirror results found by other educators who teach conflict resolution skills. In an extensive study David Johnson and Roger Johnson discovered that "conflict resolution and peer mediation training results in students knowing the negotiation and mediation procedures, being able to use the procedures in actual conflicts, transferring the procedures to nonclassroom conflicts, and transferring the procedures to nonschool conflicts in the home" (*Conflict*, 35).

In the thirteen years since writing the Win/Win Guidelines, I have had countless educators report to me that these guidelines have enabled their students to streamline their communications

during a conflict, getting to the core of the problem and resolving it quickly. As one assistant principal said, "The Win/Win Guidelines are posted in every room in the school. Students and staff resolve conflicts with dignity, confidence, and mutual respect. Our students come to school secure in the knowledge that their rights are protected in a humane, systematic, effective manner."

Workshop participants report improvements in resolving their own conflicts as a result of using the Win/Win strategy. As one teacher said, "At first it feels a little strange to communicate in this manner, but over time it becomes second nature." It's like learning to ride a bike: When you first try it, you have to think of every move; and it all feels strange. Even after you have practiced, you still might fall off. But over time you become comfortable and begin to ride with ease. You begin to notice that riding feels as natural as walking, even better. The same may be said for using the Win/Win Guidelines.

Children take to the Win/Win method quickly—the younger the better. Those children who learn in preschool or kindergarten to resolve conflicts by the Win/Win Guidelines soon integrate this method into their lives. As with all peacemaking skills, the later you introduce the guidelines, the more negative socialization you have to undo. Nevertheless, don't become discouraged if you're introducing this strategy to older children. In time, they'll greatly appreciate your efforts, especially as they see their relationships with friends and family improve. As one fifth grader said after learning conflict resolution, "I don't fight as much anymore."

A Word About "I Messages"

> *By sending I-messages, parents and teachers are also modeling a behavior: they are showing that it is legitimate to tell other persons that you want or need something from them. And they are also modeling that there is a way of communicating their feelings that is not blameful of the other, not threatening, not a put-down. Thomas Gordon*

Throughout this book you can find references to the use of "I messages," a tool for communicating with adults and children alike, both globally and locally. Many family therapists teach "I messages" to couples in counseling to help them communicate without putting their partners on the defensive. Simple declarative statements starting with the word "I," "I messages" help us express our needs and feelings in nonthreatening ways. These statements stand in sharp contrast to "You messages" that can be interpreted as blameful and therefore tend to escalate conflicts.

For example, a friend returns a much-loved book covered with coffee stains. Of course you're angry; who wouldn't be? If you never learned about "I messages," you might find yourself blurting out an automatic response like, "You are so inconsiderate! Look what you did to my book! That's the last time I'll lend you anything!" You both walk away in a huff. Your friend's feelings are wounded, and you're left stewing in your anger. Or perhaps you might stuff your feelings, not say a word to your friend, but call someone else to complain about her or him, and then act aloof the next time you see the person.

Using an "I message" enables you to address the problem assertively but respectfully: "I'm upset that my book has coffee stains all over it. What happened?" In this case, you're giving your friend a chance to respond in a nearly neutral scenario. "I'm so sorry," the friend responds. "My daughter was looking at it when she was home for spring break. She never told me she'd spilled coffee on it. Let me get you another copy." In dealing with the problem directly but nonjudgmentally, you set the groundwork for its ultimate solution. In the first example, you were driven by your automatic response mechanism, jumping to a false conclusion, and placing blame

on your friend. By using an attacking "You message," the problem isn't solved; and the friendship is damaged.

"I messages" need to be delivered from a conciliatory place inside of us that values relationships and seeks ways to solve problems. "I messages" are assertive, not aggressive; direct, not abrasive; honest, not attacking. "I messages" help preserve relationships. Adults and children of all ages need to learn how to use them.

Some people recommend avoiding the word "you" completely when delivering an "I message." For example, your spouse is chronically late. You're angry and need to address the problem. Attempting to avoid the word "you," perhaps you would say, "I get upset when people are late. I wish that behavior could come to an end." I find this approach somewhat awkward, even for me, and difficult for children to use. Instead, I recommend including "you" when necessary, but doing so in a tactful way. Tact requires an awareness of one's tone of voice and facial expression. If you include "you" in your statement but do so with sarcasm or a look of vexation, it will come across as attacking. The statement needs to be made with a pure motive: We have a problem to solve, and I'm communicating my concern in hopes of solving it. You might say to your ever-tardy spouse, "I get upset when you're late. It frustrates me because I like to be prompt. What can we do to solve this problem."

Coming from a conciliatory mode is key. We must be more committed to solving the problem than to being right or winning the argument. That's not to say the other person should win the argument instead. It means that both people need to compromise, moving in the direction of each other's needs, working together toward a fair solution. We must be willing to give up our power struggles. "I messages" help us do this. When we teach kids how to use them, we give them a tool for life.

Now lets look inside the classroom to see how "I messages" can be introduced in the context of the Win/Win Guidelines. First you'll see an example for using puppets with primary students, followed by an example for introducing Win/Win to older students.

Introducing Win/Win to Primary Students

Journal Entry: September 12

"Alf and Froggie had a conflict while you were still at home this morning," I told my class as the children sat on the floor before me, looking up at the two puppets adorning my hands.

"What happened?" asked Justin.

"Why don't I let them tell you," I responded. I held up Alf first.

"Well, I was just sitting in the book center minding my own business and reading my favorite book, *Frog and Toad*. I put my book down for a minute so I could get a drink; and when I came back to the book center, my book was gone! I looked around, and there sat Froggie at the table reading my book!"

"So what did you do?" I asked.

"I took it away from him, that's what. I grabbed it. I mean, I had it to begin with."

At this point, Froggie chimed in. "Yeah, Alf grabbed it right out of my hands! That wasn't fair!"

"So what did you do?" I asked Froggie.

"I pushed Alf and took my book back," Froggie answered indignantly.

"And then you both started fighting," didn't you? I asked.

Both puppets nodded their heads and looked down. Alf then looked at the children and said, "And then we had to go to time out."

"You're not supposed to fight in school," ChristiAnne told him.

At this point I turned to my class and said, "Boys and girls, maybe you can help Froggie and Alf solve their conflict. Do you have any suggestions for them?"

About ten hands shot up. I called on Hannah. "Use your words instead of pushing."

"Great idea, Hannah. A little hint I want to give to Alf and Froggie and to all of you is to start from 'I' instead of 'you' when you speak. You can start by saying, 'I didn't like it when. . . . That's called an 'I message.'"

Matthew's hand zoomed up, "I know, I know, Alf could have said, 'I didn't like it when you took my book. I was reading it.' He could have done that instead of grabbing. People shouldn't grab. Then they wouldn't have gotten into the fight."

Then I turned to Alf and Froggie and said, "Would you like to try it?"

"Only if he does it too," said Alf.

"OK, I'll do it," said Froggie, somewhat reluctantly.

"By the way," I added, "when you tell someone something that's on your mind and you start from 'I,' you're giving an 'I message.'" I had the children repeat the phrase "I message" after me as I wrote it on the board. "'I messages' help people work out conflicts." Picking up the puppets again, I resumed the dialogue.

"Alf, could you look into Froggie's eyes and tell him what was on your mind when you saw him holding the book you had just put down. Remember to start with 'I'."

Alf turned to Froggie and said, "Froggie, I got really angry when I saw you with my book. I was right in the middle of reading it, and I just got up to get a drink of water and then you took it. That wasn't fair."

"Alf," I said, "that was a great 'I message.' You expressed exactly what you felt and you didn't use any put-downs. Now, Froggie, I'm going to ask you to look at Alf and say back in your own words what you just heard him say to you. Start with 'I heard you say' and then just repeat back in you own words what he said."

Froggie turned to Alf and said, "I heard you say that you were angry because you got up to get a drink and when you came back I was reading your book. You said that wasn't fair. But I didn't even know you were reading it!"

I turned to Alf and said, "Did he understand what was bothering you?" Alf nodded yes.

I now looked at Froggie and said, "Would you look into Alf's eyes and give him an 'I message' expressing what was on **your** mind."

Froggie looked at Alf and said, "I was looking for something to read, so I walked over to the book center. There on the floor was a book with a frog on the cover, just like me! Well, I got so excited I picked it up and brought it over to the table so I could read it right away. I didn't know you had it first!"

"Good 'I message,' Froggie. Now, Alf would you look into Froggie's eyes and say back what you heard **him** say. Remember to start with 'I heard you say.'"

Alf looked at Froggie and said, "I heard you say that you didn't know I was even reading *Frog and Toad*. You got so excited about seeing the frog on the cover that you just picked up the book and started reading it?"

"Right," said Froggie. "I didn't mean to start anything." Here I added, "What other choice could Alf have made, instead of grabbing?"

The children were on their knees now, waving their hands. "I know!" said Terrence, "Alf could have given an 'I message' instead of grabbing. That's what I'm gonna do next time someone has something I want."

"What an excellent idea, Terrence," I chimed in happily. "Boys and girls, I think Terrence has a terrific idea for all of us."

"Froggie could have said an 'I message' instead of pushing," added Caitlin.

"Wow, boys and girls," I exclaimed. "You're all so good at this! I wish you had been here early this morning. You could have prevented this conflict from happening."

"Hey, that's on our chart," said Matthew, gesturing toward our Guidelines for a Peaceful Classroom.

Other voices started chiming in. Almost immediately, Kristina pointed to the abbreviated Win/Win Guidelines on our peacemaking bulletin board, saying, "Isn't this what we just did?"

"That's right, Kristina, we all just helped Alf and Froggie resolve their conflict using the Win/Win Guidelines, and guess what, that's exactly what you can do next time you have a conflict. Instead of fighting, you can talk it out the same way you just helped Froggie and Alf do it. What do you think?"

Scott answered, smiling, "My mom sure would be happy if I did this with my big brother."

I encouraged the children to try using the Win/Win Guidelines on their own instead of coming to me next time a conflict arises, adding, "If you can't remember the whole process, just remember to give the other person an 'I message' and then try to find a solution together."

I don't expect the children to remember every step, but I hope they've picked up something about the spirit of this process. That's what I'm looking for, an inner shift that makes them see that rather than fighting, arguing, or withdrawing they can use a strategy that helps them move beyond hurt feelings and into a mode of shared problem solving.

Introducing Win/Win to Grades 3-6

One of the most effective ways to introduce conflict resolution to intermediate and upper grade students is by staging a conflict with another teacher in front of the class. An example follows.

(Mrs. Jones is about to teach a math lesson. Unbeknownst to her class she has asked Mr. Kim to come in at this moment and pick an argument with her.)

Mrs. Jones: OK, boys and girls, take out your math books.

Mr. Kim (walking in irately): Mrs. Jones, you have inconvenienced me to no end! You still have the math guide I lent you a week ago. I must have asked you three times in the past week to give it back, and I need it *right now!"*

Mrs. Jones: (defensive): Can't you see I'm about to teach a math lesson. I can't give it back now. I need it to refer to for my lesson.

Mr. Kim (annoyed): Use your own guide!

Mrs. Jones: (raising her voice): I can't! Don't you remember? Mine was ruined when the roof was leaking after that big storm last week.

Mr. Kim (raising his voice): That's not my problem!

Mrs. Jones (angrily): Get out of my room! You can't just barge in here and interrupt my class! Besides, I have to teach this math lesson!

Mr. Kim (shouting): How am *I* supposed to teach math? You've had my guide for a week!

Mrs. Jones (shouting): If you don't get out of my room right now, I'm going to call Mr. Blaine (the principal). Do you understand?!

Mr. Kim: The only thing I understand is that I'm not leaving this room without my guide!

The kids are stark silent, eyes riveted to the front of the room, never having witnessed this kind of scene in school before. Both teachers stop arguing and turn to the class.

Mrs. Jones: Boys and girls, Mr. Kim and I really aren't mad at each other. We staged this conflict to get your attention. We believe that conflicts and put-downs are big problems among kids. We want to help you look for better ways to solve problems.

"How did you feel when you saw Mr. Kim and me yelling at each other?"

Megan: Scared! I didn't think teachers acted that way.

John: Embarrassed. You're supposed to be professionals.

Larry: Cool. It reminded me of something on TV, but it really was a little weird too. I guess I really didn't like hearing you talk to each other that way.

Tamika: I couldn't believe you were yelling at each other like that! I thought you guys were good friends. I'm so relieved it was only pretend. (A lot of kids nodded.)

Mr. Kim: Mrs. Jones and I *are* good friends. That's why we decided to do this together. We want the kids in our school to start rethinking the way they handle conflict. Did we sound like people you know?

Larry: Yeah, my parents. (Everybody laughed, some of them nervously.)

Mrs. Jones: We've certainly heard a lot of kids acting the way we did, so we figured you would relate. Would you help us come up with solutions to this conflict as though it were real? We're hoping you can think of better ways that we could have handled it.

Larry: That's cool. You mean we don't have to do math right now?

Mrs. Jones: Not right now. We're going to take the time to do some conflict resolution first. Give us some suggestions as to how we could have handled our problem.

Megan: Well, first of all, Mr. Kim didn't have to come barging into our room like that. He could have talked to you privately.

Mrs. Jones: And what could he have said?

Carlos: He could have said, "I really need my guide back today. You've had it all week."

Mr. Kim: So I should have started with the word "I." Is that right?

Carlos: Yeah, it sounds nicer.

Mr. Kim: Carlos, what you've just described is called an "I message." That's the best kind of statement to make, one that starts with "I," when you have a problem. It doesn't put the other person on the defensive. Did you notice how defensive Mrs. Jones became when I spoke to her in an attacking way, saying, "You're so inconsiderate"?

Diedre: Yeah, but she should have given back your book when you asked her for it. I don't blame you for getting angry.

John: But he didn't have to sound so mean.

Mr. Kim: What else could I have said?

Megan: You could have said, "I've asked you to return my guide a number of times. I really need it now."

Tamika: And you could have said it without sounding so angry.

Mr. Kim: That's true. Maybe I needed to cool off a little before I approached her.

Tom: You mean like get a drink of water or something. That's what I do.

Mr. Kim: That's right, Tom. Things like getting a drink of water, counting to ten, taking a deep breath—any of those things can help you cool off when you're angry. Then you can talk to the other person with a clearer head.

Diedre: But what about you, Mrs. Jones? You shouldn't have kept Mr. Kim's guide for so long. You talked mean to Mr. Kim too. You even tried to throw him out of our room, and then you were gonna tattle on him to Mr. Blaine! (The kids laughed.)

Mrs. Jones: You're right, Diedre. I, too, needed to take responsibility for what I had done. Maybe if I had said, "Gee, Mr. Kim, I'm really sorry I kept your guide so long," he might not have acted so angry.

Mr. Kim: What do you think we could have done to work out the problem?

John: You could have cooled off first, then you could have told Mrs. Jones you really needed your book back.

Theodore: Or you could have left a note in her mailbox saying you needed the book today.

Diedre: Or Mrs. Jones could have returned the guide right away instead of keeping it for a week. She could have made copies of the pages she needed.

Larry: Or she could have gone to Mr. Blaine and asked him if he had another guide for her to use.

Tanya: Or she could have borrowed someone else's guide.

Megan: Or she could have asked Mr. Kim to share his guide with her.

Larry: Or maybe she could have stopped teaching math! (The class cracked up.)

Mrs. Jones: Boys and girls, you have come up with many solutions to this problem. And, know what? Most problems have a variety of solutions. You just have to be willing to look for them.

Mr. Kim (hanging up the Win/Win Guidelines): Mrs. Jones and I want to share something with you that can help with conflicts. These six simple steps are the Win/Win Guidelines that will help you work out just about any conflict you might have, even with your parents. (The class laughed again.)

Mrs. Jones: In fact you talked about a number of these steps yourselves, like giving "I messages," cooling off, taking responsibility, and brainstorming solutions.

Mr. Kim: Let's look at the steps together. Then you can help Mrs. Jones and me decide on the solution to our problem that's likely to settle it once and for all.

Reflections

Today's lessons had a dual purpose: They provided a strategy for the children to negotiate conflicts, and they increased their thinking skills. By providing their own endings for each conflict situation, the children were, in essence, bringing the plot to a close. In doing so, they engaged in the processes of problem solving and perceiving outcomes, skills paramount to both conflict resolution and writing.

In William Kreidler's book, *Creative Conflict Resolution*, he said, "All conflict resolution involves communication. That is not to suggest that communication in and of itself is a panacea. When it comes to conflict, we do not need more communication, we need better communication" (83). I couldn't agree more. By providing the children with a strategy for resolving conflicts, we give them a way to work out the problems that inevitably come up in school and in life. Hurt feelings, disagreements, unintended insults, disputes over materials, and differing perceptions are all inherent in human interaction. When we can help children interact more skillfully with one another, we give them a gift they can take with them on any avenue they walk along through life.

When Peaceful Methods are Challenged

An interesting thing happened after I introduced the Win/Win Guidelines. Terrence, intently pondering the scenario we had just talked about, said, "I know you want us to use our words to work out conflicts, but my mom told me that if anyone hits me I should hit them back." This, unfortunately is not an uncommon reaction from parents.

"Terrence," I said, "your mom wants you to be safe, and that's why she's telling you to hit. She doesn't want anyone to hurt you. But remember the story of the Peaceful Warrior, where Danny stood up to the bully by being strong and respectful. He used his words, not his hands, to work out the conflict; and he ended up with a friend, not an enemy. Do you remember that?"

"Yes," said Terrence. "But my mom said I should hit back."

"Terrence, the way we keep children safe in this school is to teach them the Win/Win Guidelines and to help them learn to work out their problems so they don't have to fight. You're being braver and safer by using your words. But you have to stand tall like this," I had him lift his carriage to its fullest height and hold his head up high.

"Then you need to look the person in the eye and say, 'This isn't worth fighting about. Let's talk it out.'" We practiced saying the words together, standing tall and brave, just like Danny did in the story.

"But what if they still want to hit me?" he asked, considering what I had said, but still skeptical.

"Then you keep standing tall, look them in the eye, and say, 'This isn't worth getting in trouble over. I want to work out this problem with you.'" Then walk away with your head held high, your body strong, and ask an adult or peer mediator to help the two of you work out the problem."

"Isn't that tattling, if I go to a grown-up?" Terrence asked, mulling it over.

"No," I replied, "only if you go to an adult with the intention of getting the other person in trouble. If you really care about working out the problem, you won't be tattling."

"Are you sure?" asked Terrence.

"I'm sure," I said. "Just make sure your motives are pure."

"OK," said Terrence, smiling, "I'll try it."

"That's wonderful, Terrence," I said. "It's very brave of you to consider this, and I know it will be scary the first time you try it; but it's braver to do it this way than to fight."

"Just like Martin Luther King," added Terrence.

"That's right," I said, smiling inside.

At conference time I repeated this conversation with Terrence's mother, reassuring her that we both had the same goals: the safety and well-being of her child. I asked her to give the peacemaking program a chance when Terrence is in school, and to trust that the system we are using will ultimately keep him safer than will fighting. We discussed her fears that Terrence was small for his age and that he might be picked on by other kids. I described to her how I'd shown Terrence to stand tall and walk strong and never to feel less powerful because of his height, reminding him that true power comes from the inside. I also reassured Terrence's mom that indeed we were creating a peaceful school in which all of the children were expected to abide by the same standards: respect for others, and no fighting. Although my words flew in the face of all that she had grown up with, she trusted me and she trusted our school, aware of an overall feeling of respect and cooperation that had been fostered through our peacemaking program. With reservation, she agreed to give it a try.

Terry Salinger, Director of Research for the International Reading Association, used to come into my room to chat, observe, and see how teaching peacemaking had an impact on the students' literacy development. We talked about peacemaking as a tool for building the kind of trust and comfort children need to feel confident writing, learning, and taking risks. In her book, *Literacy for Young Children*, Salinger urged teachers, citing my classroom as an example, to "talk openly about issues of values, trust and respect" (96). The conversation with Terrence and his mother typifies many talks between teacher and parents in the ongoing effort to build trust and respect and provide lasting peacemaking strategies to children and their parents.

Both Terrence and his mother were encouraged to see things from another point of view. Perceiving another's viewpoint is key in using the Win/Win Guidelines. The children must learn how to reflect upon the feelings of another person in order to resolve conflicts. Fran Schmidt in her book (with Friedman), *Creative Conflict Solving For Kids*, said, "Conflict is a natural part of our lives. Conflicts arise over misunderstandings, unmet needs, different values and perceptions. Children can be taught to deal constructively with conflicts. When channeled into positive action, conflict stimulates creativity and problem-solving ability" (iii). Teaching conflict resolution skills helps children not only with conflict, but with problem-solving and creativity, thus helping in all areas of the curriculum, including oral expression and writing. The same strategy we employ in envisioning a peaceful classroom or the solution to a problem can be used in envisioning a story to write. In fact, one process reinforces the other.

Postscript

With continual reinforcement, Terrence was able to stay out of fights; and his mother came to see that children can keep themselves safe by working out conflicts rather than fighting. The daily infusion of peacemaking concepts into our school helped alter the thinking of Terrence and other children like him.

Is this approach foolproof? No. There are no absolute solutions to any problem, and no magical approaches that work under all circumstances. But there are subtle and sometimes major changes that can occur when we teach from our deepest convictions.

In schools committed to peacemaking, I have seen teachers who learn to live and model the peacemaking skills they teach, integrating them into daily discussions, reinforcing their students' positive behaviors, and finding creative ways to uphold the philosophy day after day. Before long, children begin thinking and acting differently, softening in their attitudes, listening to one another more attentively, displaying greater compassion, and resolving conflicts rather than quarreling. Do all conflicts disappear? Absolutely not, but the way children respond to conflict changes profoundly. Moreover, children begin to think about their attitudes, actions, and choices. Little by little change takes root. As I saw with both Terrence and his mother, trusting the process takes time. As Sara Ban Breathnach wrote, "Lasting change happens in infinitesimal increments: a day, an hour, a minute, a heartbeat at a time" (page 1/11). The change I am speaking of is fundamental and does not happen all at once. Does change happen with every child? I believe some form of change will occur in most children if we teach peacemaking from the heart and weave it into the fabric of everything we do. For children who have been deeply wounded, change may be very slow and largely internal. But sometimes, the most difficult children are also the most responsive to peacemaking, as in the case of Teddy, a child you will meet in Chapter 4.

Of utmost importance is your own faith in the process of peacemaking. Several years ago, I surveyed a group of fifth grade children who had been learning peacemaking since kindergarten. When the children were asked what was the most important influence in making the program successful, the majority answered, "My teachers' belief in peacemaking and the examples they set."

Teaching, it has been said, is an act of faith. So it is with the teaching of peacemaking. We must continuously find ways to bolster our faith in the process, through partnership with colleagues, related readings, daily personal practices such as prayer or meditation—anything that keeps us in touch with our highest purpose as educators and as human beings. We must keep a healthy sense of idealism. As Helen Keller observed, "No pessimist ever discovered the secrets of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new heaven to the human spirit" (qtd. in *Random Acts of Kindness*, 1998).

Envision yourself as a sailor into uncharted waters, defining a course that will affect the thoughts and actions of your students—for the rest of their lives. Your role is *that* important.

Building a Climate of Respect

> *. . . a workable planetary culture, to which almost every human being could subscribe, is a culture of civility. M. Scott Peck*

Four elements are vital in building an atmosphere of respect: fostering good listening, providing affirmation, expecting success, and setting ethical standards. Each essential element is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Fostering Good Listening Skills

"Giving another person the gift of your listening is the highest form of respect," I tell the children every year. Listening is a skill that can be devel-

oped; and when we teach this skill early, we provide children with something invaluable.'

Think about the good feeling that comes from being listened to. When someone listens with his or her heart, we feel validated, cared for, and respected. And we want to be around that person more. The same holds true for children. Their relationships thrive and grow as a result of good listening.

"Please look at me," said Kristin before she started to speak. She looked at the faces of her classmates before beginning. When all eyes were on her, bodies still, and voices silent, she began to speak. This practice is one I teach my class on the first day of school. It's a practice that continues throughout the year, one which I am diligent about, knowing that my students learn better when they listen well. Also, my life as a teacher is easier when my students are good listeners.

Build this skill first by modeling it. Listen without interrupting a child; suspend your own thoughts and try to empathize with what is being said. Be aware of your nonverbal language when you listen, leaning toward the speaker, avoiding looking around, and nodding occasionally. Ask the children to do the same, and during class discussions caution them *never* to begin speaking until everyone clearly demonstrates listening.

The Quiet Sign (two fingers up like the peace sign) is an effective way to get children to focus. I always say, "When you see me hold up the Quiet Sign, stop whatever you're doing, even if you're in the middle of a sentence; hold up the Quiet Sign yourself; and look directly at me."

We practice doing this very quickly, making it into a game initially. "When I hold up the Quiet Sign, see if you can become quiet this fast," I tell them, snapping my fingers. Then I'll tell the class to start talking. In a few moments, I'll say, "Quiet Sign," and hold up the fingers of my left hand in the sign while snapping the fingers of my right hand. The children enjoy seeing how quickly they

can quiet themselves and hold up the Quiet Sign along with me. Before long, I can give the "Quiet Sign" with the accompanying words, and the children become quiet in an instant.

Whenever a child in the class wants to speak they ask for the class's attention as Kristen did above. The speaker looks around before speaking to make sure everyone is looking and ready to listen. If someone is not, the speaker then requests their attention again. How empowering it is for children to know they can command the respect of their classmates and that what they have to say is important. Research has shown that all group processes flourish when people listen to each other actively and with empathy. In contrast, when listening skills are poor, problems develop.

The Process of Affirmation

One of the methods used to build self-esteem and reinforce respectful behaviors is the process of affirmation—the giving of sincere, appropriate praise. When we see what's good in our students and affirm them for those qualities, we hold up a mirror, showing them what is positive in themselves. The more teachers can hold up a positive mirror to children, the more we help their self-esteem to grow. They can then look out through the window of their evolving selves and more clearly see the positive qualities of others.

By modeling affirmation, we also encourage children to affirm each other. "Max, you did so well on your spelling test today," says Gianna, with a big smile. "Thank you, Gianna, so did you," says Max, smiling back. Through communications like this, care and encouragement flow. Acceptance and respect are reinforced, thus nurturing the atmosphere of peace in the classroom.

Teachers need to be cognizant of how we affirm, though, making sure that our affirmations are sincere and appropriate. In Michele Borba's book, *Esteem Builders*, she stated that for praise to be effective it must be

- Deserved
- Immediate
- Behavior-centered
- Individual
- Specific
- Repeated
- Spontaneous (52)

"Alyssia, I noticed how caring you were toward Sam just now. You noticed that she was having trouble with her math paper, and you offered to help her without being asked. It makes me feel good as your teacher to see that kind of considerateness, and it sets a good example for others. Thanks for being that way." This kind of affirmation is far more powerful than a generalization like, "Alyssia, you're such a nice girl." By specifying exactly what Alyssia had done, I not only affirmed her, but reinforced the positive behavior as well. What we give attention to continues. By affirming positive actions and catching children in the act of doing things right, we enable good behavior to continue, negative behavior to stop.

Throughout the first day of school, and on all subsequent days, affirm your students as often as possible; also, praise the whole class at times, letting them know how proud you are of their growing listening skills, respectful actions, and good choices. A simple "thanks for listening" is worth a thousand reprimands.

The Gift of High Expectations

> *Trust, respect, support, and high expectations must be generously and genuinely present for all children. Routman*

When children walk into my classroom on the first day of school, I expect them all to behave properly, regardless of histories, family difficulties, classifications, or labels. I continuously expect all

of the children to treat each other with respect, interacting as peacemakers all year long. True, each child isn't necessarily equipped with the skills to do so right away. Nevertheless, I hold this vision for every child that I teach; and I have never been disappointed. Yes, good behavior is a challenge for some children; but I've consistently seen children move in the direction of the vision I hold for them, despite their challenges. The same thinking relates to academics. Teachers increase the likelihood of learning simply by expecting it to happen—and supporting the learners in the process.

Harvard psychologist Robert Rosenthal studied the effect of teacher expectations on children's learning. He discovered that ". . . children whose teachers had confidence in their ability to learn showed IQ gains of fifteen to twenty-seven points" (qtd. in Briggs, *Your Child's Self-Esteem*, 49). So it is with children's ability to be peacemakers. If we believe they can, they will. We help children succeed when we expect the best from them; and in doing so, we enable them to fulfill their promise academically, socially, and ethically.

National speaker Carl Boyd (keynote speaker at South Brunswick District In-Service Day, 1995) told the story of a teacher assigned to a class of low achievers one year. No one told the teacher about the children's ability, however. When the teacher received the class list, she noticed that it contained each child's first and last name, followed by a three-digit number that she assumed to be their I.Q.s. The teacher was delighted to see the high number next to each child's name and surmised that she had been given an exceptionally bright class. Consequently, her expectations were very high; and she piled on challenging work. By the end of the year, the entire class excelled as their teacher had expected. What a shock when that teacher discovered that the three-digit numbers were not I.Q.s—but locker numbers! Expectations of success are critical.

Setting Ethical Standards

. . . character is how you behave when no one is looking. Robert Coles

Ethical standards are the soil for growth of positive attitudes, choices, and behaviors. Standards are not rules, but concepts by which to live. By defining clear, consistent, non-negotiable standards for all children, we set the ethical foundation for peacemaking. Again, modeling is key.

Chapter 1 includes an example of a class discussion from which guidelines were developed. The ethical standards held by the teacher for the class should be integrated into such a discussion. Often with minimal prompting, or none at all, the children will begin talking about the same standards that are important to you. Here are the ethical standards I hold for my students.

- We treat each other with respect at all times.
- We don't hurt each other physically, verbally, or emotionally.
- We respect the rights and property of others.
- We tell the truth.
- We accept differences.

As mentioned before, these standards are non-negotiable; there is never an excuse for breaking them. Each teacher needs to decide how he or she will handle noncompliance with standards. In my school we have specific consequences for fighting and speaking racial slurs. For the other standards, the consequences are up to the discretion of individual teachers. The essential point is this: Failure to comply with standards must never be ignored. The problem should be addressed immediately, letting the child know that what he or she has done is unacceptable.

Standards are critical to building what psychiatrist Robert Coles referred to as "moral intelligence." In his book, *The Moral Intelligence of Children*, Coles explained the concept of moral intelligence.

> We grow morally as a consequence of learning how to be with others, how to behave in this world, a learning prompted by taking to heart what we have seen and heard. The child is witness; the child is an ever-attentive witness of grown-up morality—or lack thereof; the child looks and looks for cues as to how one ought to behave, and finds them galore as we parents and teachers go about our lives, making choices, addressing people, showing in action our rock-bottom assumptions, desires, values, and thereby telling those young observers much more than we may realize. (5)

What we choose to emphasize and model are crucial. In an optimal situation, standards are honored schoolwide and supported by every member of the educational community. Some teachers express frustration because they tried hard to reinforce proper behavior and respect in their classes, but their efforts were thwarted by a lack of common purpose among teachers and administrators in the same school building. In cases like this, teachers feel that their efforts are thwarted once their children leave the room. Talk to your principals about creating schoolwide standards and implementing peacemaking throughout your building. You'll improve the quality of life in your school by doing so.

CHAPTER *Three*

The First Month of School

Children learn openness, sharing, positive self-concepts and cooperation, not by being told about them, but by becoming part of a community in which these attributes are the norm.

—Priscilla Prutzman

In this chapter we'll take a look at ways to integrate and reinforce peacemaking, creating a bridge between the first weeks of school and the ensuing year. The more deliberate teachers are in our efforts to model and integrate the skills of peacemaking, the more apt we will be to create a sturdy bridge for our students to walk across all year long.

Some questions to consider at this point include the following.

- Am I taking care of myself? Am I applying what I have learned to feel peaceful, calm, and relatively centered in my own life?
- Am I modeling the skills of peacemaking? Do I teach by example, sharing my own successes, struggles, and growth in this area, thus enabling the children to learn from my experiences?
- Do I have clear, consistent standards that I expect all of my students to abide by; e.g., we don't fight; put-downs of any kind are unacceptable; we listen while others speak?
- Have I integrated conflict resolution enough for the children to see it as a natural part of the way people interact?
- Am I affirming the children often, catching them in the act of positive behaviors and acknowledging them?
- Do I have a child-centered classroom that reflects the passions and interests of the individual children in it?
- Does my room exemplify peacemaking? Is it bright, inviting, and adorned with peacemaking-related bulletin boards, posters, poems, and children's work?
- Do I empower my students to make responsible choices?
- Am I keeping parents informed about peacemaking activities and educating them in the process?

- Am I integrating peacemaking into my daily activities through writing, literature, classroom discussions, and other curriculum areas?
- Am I appreciating small steps, resisting the expectation that a peaceful classroom will happen overnight?

Remember to have patience, faith, and to rejoice in the results you see, no matter how small. Teaching peacemaking is like teaching any other skill; it doesn't come all at once. Much of your work will be in changing old habits, old thinking patterns, and old ways of looking at life. All of this takes hard work, perseverance, and a belief that change is possible. Congratulate yourself for small steps along the way.

Now let's go back to the classroom and take another look inside.

Fostering Collaboration

Journal Entry: September 21

Today we picked a year-long class goal: to be good peacemakers. First we brainstormed, then the children voted and unanimously chose this goal over all others. I'm realizing how much children tend to value what the teacher prizes. Right now the class is working on a large mural to illustrate their visions of a peaceful classroom, all twenty-two of them sprawled on the floor in two long lines, each child designing, drawing, coloring, talking. I'm curious to see if they'll be able to put their early lessons in peacemaking into practice and negotiate the sharing of markers, crayons, and pencils without any direct intervention from me. After putting on a listening tape called "Work the Anger Out," I've assumed the role of observer, deliberately stepping aside so the children can work independently. I'm also curious to see what will happen and wondering if this mural will be a patchwork of each child's ideas or a cohesive vision of a peaceful classroom.

It seems that all the wiggling bodies working at the same time have caused a large hill of paper to rise between Tommy and Prem. I'm wondering if they'll see this as a problem they can solve together or a reason for conflict. Tommy first tried to flatten the bump with his hand. When that didn't work, he stopped and thought for a minute, then turned to Prem, gesturing toward the hill between them and said, "Pass the bump down." He and Prem raised their bodies, smoothed the paper they had been working on, and pushed the hill to the next person.

"Mary Lynn, pass the bump," Prem chimed in. One by one, hands were lifted and paper flattened as the bump moved from child to child. I watched and smiled as the 20-foot mural began to flatten, having done nothing myself to make it happen.

I noticed Erica grab the red marker Chris had just put down. Chris, flushing, opened his mouth to say something, closed it as though catching himself, took a breath and turned to Erica. He said irately, "I don't like it when you take my markers." Erica didn't respond. She continued coloring, pretending she didn't hear Chris.

"Hey, Erica, I'm talking to you," Chris said, a little more annoyed.

"What did you say?" asked Erica, looking at him this time. Chris repeated his initial statement.

"Oh," said Erica, putting the marker down.

"Hey, you're supposed to repeat what I say," admonished Chris.

Erica turned to him this time and said, "I heard you say you didn't like when I took the markers."

"That's right," said Chris, "It annoys me."

"OK, I'm sorry," Erica reluctantly replied. Can you share the red marker with me? I needed it to color the girl's dress."

"All you had to do was ask," said Chris. He agreed to let her use the marker until he needed it, and both children continued drawing.

The class began to sing along with the tape as each child negotiated the use of materials and space. Finally complete, their finished product held together and actually looked like a mural. Through informal talking and sharing, the children found ways to connect their ideas and work together as a team.

Reflections

Stepping back and giving the children the opportunity to put peacemaking skills into practice is important for both teachers and students. As teachers, we too often step in and supervise everything. Given full ownership of the day's activity, the children not only produced a unique product; but they also successfully tested the waters of collaboration and negotiation, and realized they could work out the problems that arose among them.

Peacemaking means building self-discipline within each child. When teachers guide children to interact with others responsibly, working out conflicts along the way, we help them build a greater sense of mastery. The resolution of problems and formulation of decisions between peers needs to rest ultimately with the children. Teachers often must move out of the way for it to happen.

Our most direct guidance in problem solving and conflict resolution needs to be given early in the year. As time goes on, a teacher will be able to step back more and more. Within a few months, a growing sense of independence begins to surface; and children can be encouraged to resolve conflicts by themselves in a quiet part of the room. "Get back to me and let me know what solution you've decided upon" is all a teacher may need to say, intervening only if the children are unable to self-mediate. In most cases our intervention will not be necessary because the children will have internalized the skills needed to work out their own problems. We saw the beginnings of this today.

Showcasing Conflict Resolution

Showcasing conflict resolution is done by mediating a dispute in front of the entire class with the permission of the disputants. In doing this demonstration, a teacher enables a whole class to become familiar with the conflict resolution process and gives children opportunities to offer solutions. Everybody gains: the disputants from hearing the input of the class, and the class from the practice in conflict resolution strategies. An added bonus: Through this process children learn that everyone has conflicts, many of them similar, and that conflicts have solutions.

Journal Entry: September 20

There was conflict today between Chris and Prem over "cutting" when it was time to line up. This was a perfect opportunity to reinforce how a conflict is mediated using the Win/Win Guidelines.

"Mrs. Drew, Prem cut me in line," Chris complained to me, with a look of annoyance. "I was here first."

"Chris, did you speak to Prem directly before coming to me?"

"No," replied Chris looking down at the floor.

I said, "Go get Prem (who had gone to the water fountain) and I'll help you work this out together." The rest of the class was in line, and we had a few minutes before lunch. I asked the boys if it would be okay with them to discuss their problem in front of the class, and they both agreed to do so.

"Chris," I said "would you look at Prem and tell him what's on your mind. Don't forget to start with 'I.'" (This was my prompt for getting Chris to use an "I Message.") I had the two boys face each other, and I stayed at their sides as they began to speak.

"Prem, I didn't like it when you cut me in line. I was there first."

I turned to Prem next. "Prem, could you say back to Chris in your own words what you just

heard him say? Start with the words, 'I heard you say.' "

"I heard you say that you didn't like it when I cut you in line; but I didn't cut you; you were over there," Prem said, gesturing toward the lunchbox area.

I turned to Chris. "Chris, could you say back what you just heard Prem say."

"I heard you say that you didn't cut me,'cause I was over there," Chris pointed to the lunchboxes. "Well, I just got out of line for a minute to get my lunchbox; and you came up and took my place—but I was there first."

"What can you both do to work out this problem?" I asked.

Prem looked up at me and said, "I think Chris should go to the end of the line because he got out of line to get his lunchbox."

"Prem, look directly at Chris when you speak because the two of you need to work this out. I'm not going to solve it for you."

At this point a few of the other children raised their hands. (When we showcase conflict resolution, it's helpful to allow other class members to contribute solutions, as long as there's no judgment or blaming.) I called on Dominic. "Maybe they both can go to the end. Chris shouldn't be able to get back in line if he left to get his lunchbox, and Prem shouldn't have run up to take his place."

"Prem, didn't you know I just got out of my place for a minute?" Chris inquired. I saw you rushing over to be first as soon as I moved out of line."

"Is that true, Prem?" I added.

Prem looked down at the floor. "Don't worry. You won't get in trouble if you just tell the truth. Your honesty is very important to me," I told Prem as he looked up. I looked softly into his eyes, hoping to convey the fact that he could trust what I was saying.

Holding my gaze he said, "Yes, it's true. I wanted to be first."

Directing the boys to look at each other again, I said, "How were you each responsible for the problem?"

Chris said, "I guess I shouldn't have tried to get back in line after leaving my place."

Prem replied, "I shouldn't have run over to take Chris's place. I know we're not supposed to run."

"Guys, I'm proud of you for taking responsibility in such an honest way," I said.

"How do you think you can solve this problem?"

Chris replied, "I guess we should both go to the end; what do you think, Prem?"

Prem looked at Chris, smiled, and said, "OK, that sounds fair."

Another child said, "Mrs. Drew, why don't we put together a line leader chart, and that way everyone will get a turn."

"Great idea," I said, and then turned to the boys again. "Is there anything the two of you want to say or do right now to show that you feel okay about each other and how you worked out your conflict?"

Chris held out his hand to shake Prem's, smiled, and said, "Thanks for working it out, buddy."

Prem, shook Chris's hand and responded, "Yeah, thanks." They walked to the end of the line together. I profusely acknowledged both of them for their willingness to work out their conflict in an honest and respectful way. (The whole process took less than five minutes.)

I next turned to the class. "Isn't this a better way to work out your problems than fighting, name-calling, or tattling?"

They nodded their heads quietly. For those who weren't taught peacemaking before, this idea was completely new. I will continue to seize as many opportunities as I can to reinforce the Win/Win method, each time enabling the children to see the value of talking out their problems as opposed to fighting. Thanks, Chris and Prem, for the opportunity.

Reflections

Conflicts like this one come up often in the course of a day and can sap the time of teachers and students alike. Being able to negotiate one's way out of conflict is essential to the smooth running of a class. Many teachers have shared with me their frustration at losing valuable chunks of class time on petty conflicts. A third grade teacher said, "I feel so burdened. It seems like I spend half my day listening to kids complain about each other. I'm looking for a way to help kids manage their own behavior, so I don't have to constantly do it for them!" Many teachers feel this way. When they bring peacemaking skills into their classrooms, they notice things starting to change.

Showcasing is one of the most effective tools for reinforcing conflict resolution strategies. When children observe conflicts being worked out, they start to integrate the strategy into their own behavior. Taking time to showcase early and often at the start of the year will help prevent disputes. A conciliatory mode starts to develop in the class as children become more confident in their collective ability to handle problems. They feel empowered by their ability to work out conflicts rather than depending on an adult to do it for them.

The time you invest in showcasing at the beginning of the year will come back to you doubled as your children internalize the lessons of peace. Ultimately you will find yourself with more time to teach.

How and When to Mediate

Obviously you're not going to mediate every conflict that occurs. My rule of thumb is that I always try to get the children to mediate on their own first. At the beginning of the year, though,

they'll need more assistance in doing this—as in the previous scenario—than they will later. By mid- to late-October children should be somewhat comfortable with the process, and you should be able to send them off to a Work-It-Out spot to self-mediate. Always ask the disputants to get back to you and tell you the solution they came up with.

Many schools have the following abbreviated Win/Win Guidelines printed on "business cards" to give to each child.

Abbreviated Win/Win Guidelines

1. Cool off.
2. "I message."
3. Say back.
4. Take responsibility.
5. Brainstorm solutions.
6. Affirm, forgive, or thank.

Children can pull out their cards and use them as guides when they have conflicts. The more you role-play and showcase resolutions of conflicts early in the year, the more adept children will become at resolving their conflicts independently as time goes on.

If a conflict is recurrent or serious, I generally will mediate it. Another situation I'll often mediate is one involving triangles, which can be too complex for children to handle on their own. As noted before, my school has peer mediators to help with conflicts. In schools that have conflict resolution programs with no peer mediation, children who have a natural knack for peacemaking will often step in and help their peers. Early in the year, however, you will want to select some common conflicts like the one you just read about to mediate in front of the class for the purpose of showcasing. The showcasing gives children valuable practice in the art of conflict resolution.

There are a number of things you will need to remember when you mediate a conflict.

- *Make sure the children have cooled off enough.* If either party is still too angry to sincerely work out the problem, try mediating later, or the following day.
- *Have the children face each other and speak to each other directly*. You should stand off to the side. Let them own the process.
- *Make sure the children speak to each other respectfully*—no negative faces, body language, or tone of voice. Sarcasm is absolutely unacceptable.
- *Don't allow the children to interrupt each other*. Remind them the first time one tries to interrupt the other. If the interruptions continue, stop the process.
- *Don't take sides*. Allow the children to discuss the problem with each other as thoroughly as they need to after giving their "I messages." Make sure each child reflects ("says back") what the other has said. You can help the process by reflecting what you hear from time to time, summarizing the main points. A teacher's summary is especially helpful if the mediation gets stuck.
- *Allow the children to come up with their own solutions*. Don't do it for them. The only way for children to take full ownership of the mediation process is to recognize their ability to self-mediate.

With kindergartners and preschoolers you will want to abbreviate the process. Start by making sure the children are cooled off (essential at any age). Have them sit or stand facing each other and say to one child, "Tell (*the other child*) what's on your mind, starting from 'I.'" Then encourage the other person to reflect, "Tell (*the first child*) what you heard, starting with 'I heard you say. . . .'" Have each child do this. Then ask, "How do you want to solve your problem?" Let them come up with their own solutions, but give prompts if necessary. Lastly, have the children shake hands, hug, or thank each other.

Difficult Children/Difficult Situations

The longer I teach the more I see children coming to school with a variety of problems. The children with the biggest problems are the ones who benefit most from peacemaking. Teachers in workshops, despairing over their most difficult students, often say, "Peacemaking sounds great, but it will never work with Pat." My reply usually is, "If you are willing to put in the extra time, effort, and love to reach that child, you probably will." Most elementary-aged children are still reachable. If teachers write a child off because he or she seems too difficult, we may relinquish that child's only opportunity to be reached.

What follows are examples of two children who seemed unreachable before learning the skills of peacemaking.

Accepting the Challenging Child: Ben

> *Acceptance is like the fertile soil that permits a tiny seed to develop into the lovely flower it is capable of becoming—acceptance enables a person to actualize his or her potential.*
> *Thomas Gordon*

By the time Ben came to me in second grade, he had already gained a reputation as one of the more difficult children in our K-6 school of over five hundred children. In first grade he had literally stalked the halls, defying teachers who had attempted to discipline him, and running off when reprimanded. During his first two years, he spent many hours in the principal's office; and he was described as hyperactive, angry, oppositional, and unable to get along with his peers.

When I learned that Ben was going to be in my class, I wanted immediately to make him feel accepted. Discovering that Ben spent most of his time in the care of his grandmother, I decided to visit the two of them prior to the start of school. It was a hot August day when I stopped by as Ben played in front of the house and his grandmother watered the flowers.

"Hi, Ben," I said, "I just wanted to let you know you're going to be in my class this year. I want to welcome you and let you know how happy I am to have you with me."

He seemed surprised, didn't say much, and looked at me from time to time as though wondering if I were for real. Before long his grandmother and I began talking; she expressed concern and care for Ben, offering to help in any way she could. I assured her that Ben was going to have a great year and that I would be there for him in any way he needed. Ben just listened, but I noticed his face begin to soften.

On the first day of school I warmly welcomed Ben, referred to the conversation at his grandmother's house, and reiterated how happy I was to see him. I seated him in front of the room close to my desk, not just to "keep an eye on him," but so that I could be readily available for support and encouragement.

Very quickly I saw that Ben's hyperactivity and lack of focus were serious impediments to his learning and that these problems were compounded by his low self-esteem. Ben's frustration would often result in fits of anger, exacerbated by his belief that the other children were watching him and making fun of his mistakes. Ben's problems came to a head during the second week of school. Let's look inside my classroom to see how a difficult situation became the window through which I could see Ben's problems more clearly.

Journal Entry: September 16

Early in the school year, I like to use a lesson called "Things I'm Good At," which helps to build self-esteem.

"Boys and girls," I began, "we're all good at certain things, and not so good at other things. For example, I'm good at drawing. When I was your age, I used to draw all the time; and even as a

grown-up I still draw whenever I can." (I showed them a pen-and-ink drawing I had done.)

Next I shared that I was always bad at throwing and catching a ball, saying, "I used to be so embarrassed every time my class played baseball on the playground that I would look for any excuse not to play. But I also remembered that there were things I was good at, and that made me feel better."

"Every one of you is good at something, and today we're going to spend some time talking and writing about things you're good at, things that make you feel proud."

"What are some of the things you're good at? Turn to the person sitting across from you and answer this question together."

The paired sharing went on for a while; then the children shared in the large group. We talked at length; and their answers included being good at reading, sports, helping at home, riding a bike, cleaning their rooms, and taking care of pets. Some of the children who'd had trouble coming up with an idea realized that they were good at "caring" about family members, pets, or the world. By the end of the discussion, every child had a topic to write about except Ben, who had put his head down on the table and said nothing. I carefully approached him in an attempt to help him delve below the veneer of his poor self-image and discover at least one quality he felt good about.

Me: Ben, I bet there's something you're really good at.

Ben: Nothing. I'm not good at nothing.

Me: How could that be. You're a special person and I know you have things you're good at.

Ben (looking more negative): I told you, I'm not good at nothing.

Me (going on a hunch): I have a feeling you're good at caring.

Ben (picking up his head and shouting): I don't care about nobody, and nobody cares about me! (Obviously I had touched a nerve.)

Me: Is that how you feel, like nobody cares about you?

Ben: Yeah, nobody does.

Me: You're wrong there, Ben. Somebody does care about you, and I know who that person is for sure.

Ben: Who?

Me: It's me. I care about you. I like you and I care about you. (He looked at me in disbelief, but his eyes filled with tears.) And there's someone else I know cares about you, too.

Ben: Who's that?

Me: Your grandmother, that's who. I know she cares about you because she told me.

Ben (crying now): No she doesn't! She doesn't care about me at all!

Me (reflecting what I heard him saying): You feel that she doesn't care about you? I can see why you're feeling sad. But why do you feel that she doesn't care?

Ben: Because she's always too busy to talk to me when the other kids are around. (Ben's grandmother baby-sits a group of children.)

Me (reflecting his feelings again): So you'd like more of her attention, and you feel that she doesn't give it to you because she doesn't care about you?

Ben (crying, shoulders shaking): She doesn't!

Me: Ben, I'm going to tell you a little secret. Your grandmother cares about you and loves you very much. She told me so, and I believe her. In fact, she even offered to come into the class to help on Fridays.

Ben (brightening a little): She did?

Me: She did. In fact, she offered to come in because she cares about you and wants you to have a good year—and so do I. (He stopped crying and looked at me.) Would you like her to come in?

Ben: Yeah, I would.

Me: You do care about her, don't you?

Ben: I guess so.

Me: And she cares about you, too—a lot.

Ben: You think so?

Me: I know so. (Ben finally smiled.) Now, how about writing something about caring for Nana. I bet you help her with the other kids. I have a feeling you're real good at that.

Ben: I do.

Me: That's a way of showing you care. You can write about that.

Ben: Will you help me.

Me: I'll help you.

Tentatively, Ben picked up his pencil and began writing. Before long he had a short paragraph starting with the words, "I'm good at helping my Nana. . . ."

Reflection

We, as teachers, must find a place in our hearts that enables us to love children like Ben. By doing so, we can better help them to love themselves. Thomas Gordon told us:

> . . . the genuine acceptance of a person, just as he or she is, is the critical factor in fostering that person's constructive change, in facilitating the person's problem solving, in encouraging movement toward greater psychological health or productive learning. It is a beautiful paradox of life that when people feel genuinely accepted by another as they are, they are free to think about how they want to develop, grow, change, be more of what they are capable of being. (179)

Looking at this episode with Ben, I can see how true Gordon's statement is. Receiving unconditional acceptance, coupled with firmness, limits, and expectations of success, Ben thrived. For the first time since starting school, he began functioning on grade level, stopped fighting with other children, and developed a deep appreciation for learning. In Part II you will see this reflected in Ben's writing. Acceptance was the key to his growth and change.

Learning to Rethink One's Actions: Juan

> *Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding. (Einstein)*
>
> *Mastery in the emotional domain is especially difficult because skills need to be acquired when people are usually least able to take in new information and learn new habits of response—when they are upset. Coaching in these moments helps. Anyone, adult or fifth grader, needs some help being a self-aware observer when they're so upset. . . . Daniel Goleman*

Juan was a troubled sixth grader with a quick, violent temper. His teacher often sent Juan to my room to "help" the younger children and receive informal mentoring from me. I would frequently talk to him about whatever was on his mind, giving subtle guidance on how to handle his easily ignited anger. Sometimes Juan would stop by during lunch for an open ear, something that was sorely missing in his young life.

One day I heard Juan had gotten into serious trouble. He'd had a dispute in the lunchroom, shoving another student against the corner of a shelf. The child required stitches in the resulting gash, and Juan was suspended.

When the suspension was over, I called Juan to my room so I could hear firsthand what had happened. Since I wasn't able to coach him during the conflict, I decided to help him take another look at what had happened so he could avoid a recurrence. Our conversation went like this.

Me: I was sorry to hear you were suspended. What happened?

Juan: Me and Lev got into a fight and I pushed him.

Me: Is that why you were suspended?

Juan: Yeah, he was bleeding real bad and he had to go to the hospital.

Me: How did you feel about that?

Juan: Bad. I didn't mean to hurt him so bad. I just got angry, that's all.

Me: Juan, we've talked about your anger before; and you seemed to understand that you have to choose other actions when you get angry.

Juan: It just happened so fast, and Lev really got on my nerves.

Me: What did he do?

Juan: He kept messin' with me. He took my hat and I told him to give it back, but he wouldn't. So I tried to grab it and he kept pulling it away, so I finally grabbed him and shoved him. That's when he fell into the corner and cut his head.

Me (reflecting his feeling): Lev can be a tease, right?

Juan (balling his fist and punching it into his open palm): Yeah, he was really makin' me mad.

Me: It sounds like you *were* real mad; but then you ended up getting in big trouble, so was it worth it?

Juan: Not really.

Me: What can you do next time you feel that angry, so you don't end up making a choice that gets you in trouble and harms the other person?

Juan: I don't know.

Me: Were there any adults around?

Juan: Yeah, there were. I guess I could have gone for help. (We had previously discussed this as an option).

Me: That would have been a great idea. Then maybe you could have avoided the fight. Did you try talking to Lev first?

Juan: I did. I tried giving him an "I message" (another option we had previously discussed). But he still didn't stop. He was really playin' with me.

Me (empathizing): It is frustrating when you try to give someone an "I message" and they don't listen. That makes me angry, too. But you have to remember, you always have a choice about your actions.

Juan: When I get mad like that, it's hard to think.

Me: I know what you mean. Remember how we talked about cooling off?

Juan: Oh, yeah. I guess I didn't do that.

Me: What were some of the things we talked about that you can do when you get angry?

Juan: I can get a drink of water or take some deep breaths.

Me: That's right. And you can get help after you do those things if you need to.

Juan: I'm gonna try to remember this stuff for next time. I don't wanna get suspended again, and I don't wanna hurt someone bad like I did to Lev. I'm lucky he forgave me.

Reflections

How essential it is to teach our children mastery in the emotional domain. As Thomas Likona said, "It takes will to keep emotion under the control of reason." Teachers need to help young people build an internal discourse that guides their actions. Only by teaching specific skills can we enable our children to begin mastering their emotions. Until that time, they will respond automatically and without forethought when faced with anger and conflict. The only way to avoid this kind of response is to teach anger management/conflict resolution skills during a neutral time, a time when they are not embroiled in conflict. Teaching the skills in advance opens the way to coaching when an actual conflict occurs. In Juan's case if a trained adult had been nearby, the conflict may have been deflected. Juan would have been encouraged to cool off, and mediation could have ensued. This case shows the importance of doing peacemaking schoolwide. The more people in the school community trained in these skills, the greater the chance for their successful use.