

Shifting Your Classroom from Control to Connection Will Decrease Problems and Increase Learning

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SUMMARY

Sarah Chen, a teacher with six years of experience, shares her transformative journey from traditional discipline methods to implementing conscious discipline in her classroom. Initially accustomed to strict control and yelling, she embraced a new approach that focuses on emotional regulation and communication, leading to significant improvements in student behavior and social interactions.

- Sarah's teaching philosophy is rooted in her love for children and their joy in learning.*
- She initially relied on traditional discipline methods, including yelling and strict behavior management, which often suppressed student expression.*
- Introduced to conscious discipline during her hiring process, she was open to learning new techniques for classroom management.*
- The training emphasized the importance of self-regulation for both teachers and students, which resonated with her experiences.*
- One notable success story is Alan, a student with autism, who improved significantly in social interactions and emotional regulation through role-playing and conscious discipline strategies.*
- Sarah learned that addressing emotional issues in the moment is more beneficial than strictly adhering to the curriculum.*
- Building connections with her students has helped her manage disruptions more effectively, fostering a classroom environment where students feel safe to express themselves.*
- Overall, conscious discipline has not only transformed her classroom dynamics but also changed her internal approach to teaching and student interactions.*

my name is Sarah Chen I've been teaching for six years I got into teaching because I just really love kids I love being exposed to their energy and the joy that they have still in learning and in life and exploring

you know where I had come from yelling was not something that was out of the ordinary you know yelling until your face was red-hot about to explode I really tried to control the behavior I tried to control the children in my class just to kind of keep things calm it was a lot of dismissing what was happening so that I could move on no children were getting up out of their seats no children were disrupting no

children had any kind of distractions it's so normal to just say okay go sit down let's keep going because you feel the pressure to have to cover the curriculum when I came here I was looking for something new [Music] so the

very first time that I had heard of conscious discipline I was actually applying for my job in this current position it was two years ago and I

remember the administrators asked me what my discipline regimen was within my classroom and I had been used to using the colors and the clips and you know every day we had a conduct sheet and I was actually really proud of it because I kept up with it every single day all my kids had it and so I had you know a model and a binder and everything to show her and so I showed it to the

administrators and I thought they were gonna be you know really impressed with my organization and all they said was would you be willing to change we actually do something called conscious discipline at our school I remember telling them I have no idea what that is but I would be willing to learn about it before the school year even started my first year here Karen Hickman came for kind of the three-day pre-service training and I just remember hearing

some of the tools that she was providing with us and kind of the situational things have you ever you know yelled so loud that your face was hot and I yes every day when I used to teach you know at my other school and so for somebody to tell me you know this is something new it's worked this has to do with your brain you know and so for me it just makes sense regulating yourself that all

of that applies to adults that makes sense to me so why wouldn't we teach it to our kids one of the students that I had last year his name is Alan a little boy who had autism when he first came to my class last year he had come from a school for special needs kids I just remember thinking great I get the one kid that came from a class of eight and he's in this class with almost twenty

eight children when he came he struggled with socially acceptable behaviors he would cut his hair with the scissors he would cut socks and he just was not accustomed to making eye contact he wasn't accustomed to being talked to people would talk at him he would throw temper tantrums and he would have his arms crossed Alan used to run to he's to run away from me he just didn't know how to interact with his peers I wanted to

help him integrate socially with the students in the beginning it was a lot of role-playing in which they loved first of all what are what are some things you feel internally and then also how is that manifested or what does that look like in somebody else it's like have you ever you know been so upset and you know we didn't like situational things or your sister went into your room and she wasn't supposed to and you

know you just felt your face getting hot and your fists were just doing this and what were your feet doing and so they would stomp their feet exactly well here are some things you can do this experience that I'm having this emotion that I'm feeling right now these are very specific to very applicable tools that I can use in this very moment [Music]

I began noticing that his meltdowns were increasingly smaller it got to the point where at the end of the year I

didn't have any meltdowns from him and now he's in fourth grade and I get to see him every day in the hallway hi Michelle he always waves at me but I see him and he's adjusted so well when I talk to his teacher he interacts with his peers he's doing his work he's making great grades

he hasn't had a single meltdown this year throughout the day there's disruptions or there's issues or somebody has a conflict with somebody else the behavior that they're displaying is a form of communication it's something that they're trying to tell me is going on internally so being able to teach them in that moment in stopping for five minutes stopping for ten minutes to discuss a problem to resolve an issue is not that detrimental to my lesson it's not that detrimental

to the curriculum but that actually it's more valuable because now that I've introduced it to them they've been able to use that as a way to communicate either to me in the moment or they can communicate to their peers and I've seen huge differences in just the way that my kids interact with each other I'm having to problem-solve less for them I feel like conscious discipline has changed me internally more than it has my classroom operate I think one of the big things

that's helped me with managing disruptions is being connected to my kids and then feeling a connection with me can tell when a certain child is fidgeting a certain way that he's you know bothered by something that happened at home controlling a child from the outside definitely not as effective as teaching them how to control themselves and try to regulate themselves from the inside