

## BALANCING AUTHORITY AND APPROACHABILITY: FINDING THE RIGHT TEACHER PERSONA

*by:*

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In recent years, the educational landscape has undergone various transformations. Research based educational methodologies have changed not only classroom dynamics but also the student-teacher relationship. However, modern times have brought both the good and the bad. This has prompted a recent trend of teacher disrespect and powerlessness, as well as a rise in cases of teacher mockery and humiliation by students. This is a principal problem that requires a swift and effective solution.

Teachers are essential in shaping the future generation, and their role should be respected and valued. They are crucial for managing classrooms effectively and creating a positive learning environment. Teachers must project a persona that commands respect and is relatable to students to create a classroom atmosphere that supports learning. This delicate balance involves considering the methods to establish authority, also focusing on maintaining approachability and supportiveness.

Establishing authority in the classroom begins with setting clear expectations and consistently enforcing rules. Students need to understand what is expected of them and the consequences of failing to meet these expectations. Consistency it helps build a sense of fairness (treating everyone equally) and predictability (knowing what to expect), which are essential for maintaining order. However, authority should not be the same as harshness. Instead, it should be paired with a demeanor that shows students that their teacher genuinely cares about their success and well-being.

On the other hand, approachability is about being open, empathetic, and accessible. An approachable teacher listens to students' concerns, offers support, and creates an inclusive environment where every student feels heard and valued. Developing these traits is essential for establishing robust student-teacher relationships, which are fundamentals to the effectiveness of the educational process. When students feel comfortable approaching their teacher, they are more likely to engage in the learning process, ask questions, and actively participate in class.

The challenge lies in effectively combining the traits of authority and approachability. A teacher must be firm when necessary, setting boundaries and following rules. Simultaneously, they should be warm and understanding, showing students that they are there to support them. Teachers can achieve this balance through clear communication, consistent actions, and a genuine interest in students' lives. For instance, taking time to learn about students' interests and addressing them by name can go a long way in building rapport while maintaining authority.

Finding the right balance between authority and approachability is essential for creating a positive and productive classroom environment. Teachers who balance authority and approachability will earn their students' respect, trust and appreciation. This balance fosters a learning environment where students feel safe, supported, and motivated to succeed. Being firm and empathetic allows teachers to inspire their students to reach their full potential while maintaining a well-managed classroom.

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