



Never Let Them See You Sweat

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1).

- What are some gentle answers to an angry or hurt child?
- What are some words that might stir up anger in a child?

▼ Training Session

Woody Hayes was an Ohio State football legend—a coach who’d won 238 games and lost only 72. But in the last game he coached, Hayes reacted to a pass interception by literally punching an opposing player. Hard. On national television.

Hayes let his temper destroy his career.

Teachers aren’t supposed to get angry and show their tempers in class... but it’s tempting, isn’t it? Jacob refuses to listen, Kayla insists on interrupting, and Brendan’s busy entertaining instead of participating—all at once. You feel your temperature rising, your face growing red. You’re not being respected—and your reaction is anger.

Be careful: You’re about to go “Woody Hayes.”

Hayes lost his job—and career. The damage that would result from your slamming down your Bible or erupting into a tirade would be far worse.

It might keep a child from ever returning to your classroom to learn about Jesus.

Do whatever it takes to stay silent if you’re feeling the need to condemn, mock, or in any way destroy the spirit of a child—even a child who’s misbehaving.

Here are four safety valves to keep handy for those moments of frustration or anger:

1. Pause and seek understanding. Tap into why you felt the need to snap. Are you nervous? Had too much caffeine? Weren’t prepared for the problem? Feeling a loss of control?

2. Evaluate your goals. What were you trying to accomplish? If it’s to connect with kids and communicate God’s love through your words and actions, how does blowing your stack accomplish that? It won’t—so pause, take a deep breath, and engage kids where they are. If they simply can’t—or won’t—engage with the lesson, turn things around: Ask them about their lives. Work on the relationships this week. Dive into the lesson next week.

3. Evaluate your kids’ expectations. Maybe they’re misbehaving because they’re not getting what they expected to receive. Have you dropped games lately, or eliminated another favorite part of the routine? It’s OK to ask students why they’re not following the classroom rules.

4. Evaluate your expectations of yourself. You want to be an excellent teacher, and that’s a great goal. Your students need an excellent teacher. But you also need to be your students’ friend. Maybe your kids need a friend to ask what’s behind their restlessness or rudeness, to challenge their behavior and offer alternatives. Maybe you’ll need to teach your children how to learn together before they’re ready to learn.





Take this training deeper as you think over these questions:

- How can avoiding losing your cool create a better teaching environment?
- What causes you to lose your cool? How can you avoid that next time?

▼ Journal

Circle the situations below that would make your blood boil; underline the words that would keep your temperature the same.

- A child tells you “no.”
- Two children scream at the top of their lungs as they wrestle with a toy.
- A child gets up and runs for the door.
- A child yells a curse word.
- A child tells a very off-color story.
- A child sits off to the side and refuses to join the group.
- A child uses the Lord’s name in vain.
- Know of one that’s not listed? Write it here:

Now ask God to give you patience for those you circled.

Perfection isn’t your ultimate goal. Being a character of excellence is the critical goal. You can do it—God will help!

▼ Application

Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit—and a good one to practice. Take a cube of ice in your hand. As it melts in the palm of your hand, consider how you can have a positive attitude in each scenario listed in the journal section above.

After two minutes, throw away the ice. Now consider how hard it was to think of *positive* things while you were distracted with physical pain. How is that like or unlike what happens in the classroom as you think of addressing problems with a positive attitude?