

High Kindness/High Firmness

Materials needed:

- High kindness/high firmness chart (back side of this handout), chart paper to copy the chart and your responses on
- *The Heart of Learning and Teaching*, pp.71-78 (six teaching principles)
- Joshua vignette

Overview:

This exercise is useful for helping parents and teachers “get” the idea that kids do better when they feel better, and that limits are most effective when they are set with kindness and respect. The grid on this handout is one way of looking at different styles that categorize how we interact with our students.

Directions:

In your small group, please read the “Joshua” vignette and for each section of the chart, brainstorm a response to the following “situation” below for Joshua that would fall under each of the four categories: Permission, Neglectful, Dictator and Democratic. Then hypothesize how Joshua might react to each of the statements externally and internally

Joshua is in his Science class, a class that he likes a lot. He is wandering around, touching the microscopes and getting distracted by the upcoming assignment which will be to use the microscope to look at particles. The teacher is trying to get Joshua back to his seat and ready to listen to instructions and is beginning to feel frustrated by how much time is being used to get Joshua situated. What will the teacher say/do to get Joshua back to his seat?

When it is time to present to the large group, share with the group the Kindness/Firmness chart and read the “situation” above to the audience. Share each of the four responses in the grid and what the internal and external reactions might be of Joshua.

Questions for reflection: How might doing this activity be helpful for teachers when working with students impacted by trauma? How will using a “kindness/firmness” approach help the teacher with their own “stuff?” How might you respond when people complain that this approach puts teachers and students on equal footing? For older students, how can they learn to set limits with their teachers?

***** Remember to take care of yourself. Vicarious trauma is real. *****