

## The Number One Secret to Getting Your Worst Pupils to Behave

by Rob Johnson There is one true key to successful behavior management. It doesn't matter how many effective teaching skills and useful behavior strategies you have in your arsenal; without this, your efforts will eventually come unstuck. The secret ingredient is... the teacher-pupil relationship. You see, when you really get to know a pupil you become aware of their triggers - the things that upset them and cause all sorts of problems in class. And when you're dealing with children who carry all kinds of emotional baggage and flare up for no apparent reason, this is valuable knowledge. After all... stopping behavior problems from occurring is much easier when you know in advance what causes them! When you take the time to get to know a pupil, you find out what they enjoy, what they like doing and what their interests are. With this information you have the power to make all your lessons instantly appealing and your conversations with them stimulating. When you reach out and get to know any child in school you show them they're valued as people. Once they learn this, their ability to take an active role in other positive relationships is improved; they fit in better and so are less likely to get into serious trouble and less likely to spoil your lessons. Also, when you show you're actually interested in them as individuals they will respect and trust you. Pupils will behave much better for the teacher they trust and respect. Once you get to know them anything really is possible; doors are opened to a whole new world of communication, cooperation, fun and mutual respect. The best technique I've found for helping you discover their likes, dislikes, hobbies, passions and interests is... ..an age-old salesman's tool called the 'Record Card'. Record cards are used by salesmen to record a client's personal information and so enable him to be more 'familiar' on his next visit. Each time he returns to the same client and has a conversation, more information is recorded on the card. It might be a chat about the football last night - revealing his favorite team for example or a few words about his family. These tidbits gradually build up and form a library of useful information which can be drawn on to deepen the relationship during the next meeting. It's a well known fact that people would rather have a conversation about their own lives and interests than anything else, so the salesman that does this will always make the sale. The huge benefit of the information on the record card is that it enables the salesman to tailor the conversation, and even new product lines, to the client's interests, needs and desires. When this is done, the client is far more receptive and likely to buy. We can discover the passions and interests of our students very quickly through our own simple version of the Record Card - a fun questionnaire to give to the worst pupils in class as a fill-in activity. The information you glean from these completed questionnaires is priceless and these are just some of the ways you can use it... \* Tailor rewards to a pupil's interests making them have more effect. (if you have a pupil who's nuts about a certain breed of dog there's no point in giving him a sticker with a car on it!) \* Provide reading material - magazines, journals and books - that relate to their specific areas of interest - for break times, quiet reading sessions, registration etc. \* Plan really, really interesting lessons! I'm talking about lessons that grab them from the word go and hold their attention all the way through. This is only possible when they're actually interested in what you're talking about. You might choose to plan a series of lessons for the whole class around a topic that several pupils are interested in, or cover a skill such as narrative writing and encourage them to write a story about their subject of interest. \* Use them as a relationship-building tool. They enable you to strike up conversation on a topic you know they're interested in and this is crucial with 'hard to reach' kids - it shows you care about them and are interested in them as people. Being able to chat with a pupil on their level is magical and is the short-cut to having far fewer discipline problems. To find out more about how to use record cards and relationships to get your worst pupils to behave visit [www.classroom-management.Org](http://www.classroom-management.Org).

### About the Author

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