

Teaching values for life!

A six-part series by David Koutsoukis

5. Be the achieving kind!

Encourage your students to think positively and achieve their potential.

When my eldest son first started reading I was, like most parents, very proud of his efforts. I recall having a discussion at the time with my dad about how thrilled I was that he was reading. I vividly remember Dad saying 'And now it's your great responsibility to help him continue to achieve his potential'. Those words resonated deeply with me and made me think about the fact that most successful people I knew, both personally and by reputation, had a strong support base to encourage them and help them achieve their potential. These 'significant others' included parents, family, teachers, sports coaches and other caring people in the community.

As parents and teachers, we especially have a great responsibility to help our children and students achieve their potential—it's our job!

Achievement with balance

When I say we need to help our kids achieve their potential, I'm not talking about pushing kids to become 'superstars' in whatever field they may show talent. I'm talking about developing well-rounded individuals who make the most of their talents and abilities, and which will, in turn, build self-esteem and enhance their connections with others. When I think back, it was probably Dad's comment that was to become the catalyst for the development of the 'Six kinds of best' concept. I had determined that I wanted to leave a positive legacy for my children so that if anyone asked

them 'What have you learned from your dad?' they would say, 'Be kind to yourself, be kind to others, be kind to the environment, be the learning kind, be the achieving kind and be the community kind'.

So, the first lesson about encouraging our students to be the 'achieving kind' is that their achievements should not be to the detriment of the other five kinds of best.

The Law of Attraction

One of my favourite 'concepts' that helps people think positively and achieve their goals is the 'Law of Attraction'. The Law of Attraction says that whatever you are thinking and feeling, plus your actions, creates your future. If your thoughts and feelings are positive, your actions are more likely to be positive; therefore, you are much more likely to attract positive circumstances—you are 'making your own luck'. Conversely, negative thinking will have the opposite effect.

So, the question is, 'How can we change negative thinking to positive thinking?'

In his book, *The law of attraction*, Michael Losier suggests a simple but powerful technique for changing negative thoughts into positive ones. He calls it the 'Magic Question'. When you have negative thoughts, you should ask yourself the Magic Question, which is: 'So, what do I want?' For example, if you are concerned about behaviour in your classroom, instead

of walking into the class expecting bad behaviour (and probably getting it), ask yourself 'Well, what do I want?' The answer is 'good behaviour'. You will then focus on what good behaviour looks, sounds and feels like—such as students entering the class properly, not annoying others and working well in class. By doing this you are: 1. Expecting good behaviour and therefore more likely to get it through the self-fulfilling prophecy; and 2. Clarifying in your mind what you need to do to get what you want. For example, you might arrive at class early so that students will be more orderly from the moment they arrive, split up students who might annoy each other, or simply make your lessons more exciting so that your students won't be bored.

So, when can you apply the 'Magic Question' and how can you get your students to ask it?

Goal setting

Setting goals is an important part of being the achieving kind. As the old saying goes, 'How will you get there if you don't know where you're going?' Many of the disengaged students I have come across in schools seem to have no sense of purpose or direction—they have nowhere to go. Having goals and a sense of purpose is a key component of a healthy self-esteem.

The Law of Attraction also applies to achieving goals. The more we focus on what we really want, the more likely it is that opportunities will arise that will help us get them. Therefore, help your students achieve their goals by getting them to focus on them. They should list them, create pictures of them and refer to them often. Brian Tracy, a goal-setting



Key pointers

How to encourage your students to think positively and achieve their potential.

Encourage your students to:

- 5.1 have a go
- 5.2 try lots of different things
- 5.3 discover what they're good at and enjoy doing
- 5.4 do things to the best of their ability
- 5.5 pursue quality and personal excellence
- 5.6 use their talents
- 5.7 develop a sense of purpose
- 5.8 manage time effectively
- 5.9 manage money wisely
- 5.10 set worthwhile goals and make plans to achieve them
- 5.11 show persistence and self-discipline to achieve goals
- 5.12 look at different ways of doing things—think creatively
- 5.13 develop good communication skills
- 5.14 seek good role models.

expert, suggests that we read and write down our goals in a notebook every day. Remember that we not only need to conceive of and feel positive about our future, we also have to take action.

So, what can you do to help your students determine, focus upon, and take action towards achieving their goals?

Developing persistence and self-discipline

Persistence and self-discipline are key attributes needed by students to be the achieving kind; however, they are perhaps two of the most difficult things to instil in them (and ourselves!) A practical tool to help develop self-discipline and persistence is to use what I call an 'energising quote'. These are mantras you say to yourself to motivate action and to give yourself a mental boost when your resolve starts to fade. Some examples of energising quotes include: 'If it's to be, it's up to me', 'What you see is who'll you'll be', and 'What goes around comes around'. My favourite: 'Winners do what losers don't'. I often use this when I have a task to do that I don't really feel like doing, but have promised to someone that I would complete it. I don't want people (or myself) to think I'm a loser, so I just get on with it.

What simple energising quotes can your students use?

Being the achieving kind is, of course, much more than just thinking about positive thinking, goal setting and persistence and self-discipline. You want to get your students to develop these skills and attributes so that they will be well on their way to becoming the achieving kind. Check out the key pointers and ten tips included in this article for other strategies and remember the words of Napoleon Hill, who once said: 'Whatever the mind of man can perceive and believe, it can achieve'.

Ten simple things you can do to encourage your students to be positive and achieve their potential

1. Teach your students the 'Magic Question', to use when they are feeling negative—'So, what do I want?'
2. Have a goal setting and review session in your class each week.
3. Get your students to create a goals poster or collage—drawings or pictures of their goals.
4. Develop whole-class goals and create a record of progress, such as a chart, ladder or jar of marbles.
5. Teach motivational quotes like 'If it's to be, it's up to me'.
6. Praise students when they show persistence and self-discipline.
7. Ask students to create a 'Have a go!' journal or chart that records each time they have tried something new.
8. Create 'This is a positive-thinking zone' signs for your classroom.
9. Teach your students a repertoire of positive words, such as 'fantastic', 'wow' and 'brilliant'.
10. Create a hall of fame with pictures of students who have been the achieving kind.

Give your children 'Six kinds of best'

This article is the fifth in a series of six articles based on the 'Six kinds of best' concept. The concept provides a simple framework to help teachers and parents articulate what good values are and gives students signposts to point them in the right direction when they get to 'crossroad' moments in their lives—times when they need to make important decisions. By teaching the 'Six kinds of best' we are giving our children a simple, consistent and meaningful message that helps them remember what they need to do in order to become happy and successful individuals.

The Six kinds of best affirmation



www.sixkindsofbest.com

Seven ways to teach children to 'be the achieving kind'

1. Teach children the 'Six kinds of best' affirmation so they internalise the core values.
2. Articulate what 'being the achieving kind' means. See the key pointers. Put up a poster to remind students.
3. Teach lessons on the key pointers from the *Values education toolkit* books. Free downloads are available at <www.sixkindsofbest.com>.
4. Use 'Six kinds of best' language; for example, if someone is being positive or achieving their potential, say things like, 'Fantastic effort, Kym. That's being the achieving kind'.
5. Catch children achieving well. Give them an 'I am the achieving kind' sticker or certificate. Better still, get children to praise each other when they see examples of other children being the achieving kind.
6. Use an individual or class progress chart to reinforce positive examples of achievement.
7. Create a 'Be the achieving kind' class display.

For more information on the 'Six kinds of best' *Values education toolkit* resources, visit <www.sixkindsofbest.com>.