

The Power of Mindsets: Nurturing
Motivation, Learning, and Resilience
in Angry, Resistant Students

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The power of mindsets

Mindsets: The assumptions and expectations we have
for ourselves and others that guide our behavior

What is the mindset of adults who touch the hearts
and minds of angry, resistant students, thereby
increasing cooperation, self-discipline, hope, and
resilience? Is the concept of mindsets discussed at
staff meetings?

Features of a positive mindset

To believe in the resilience of angry and resistant
students to overcome adversity, become more
cooperative, and beat the odds against them:
To become a "charismatic adult"

"I want to be a charismatic adult. What do I
do?"

Features of a positive mindset

To believe that all children from birth want to learn and be successful

To believe that all students are motivated, but unfortunately, some are dominated by “avoidance motivation” as a way of protecting themselves from situations that they believe will lead to failure and humiliation and over which they feel little control

Features of a positive mindset

To believe that if the strategies we are using with angry students are not effective then we must ask, “What is it that we can do differently to help the situation?” rather than continue to wait for the students to change first: This should not be seen as blaming but rather as empowering ourselves

Features of a positive mindset

To be empathic: We must see the world through the eyes of the students with whom we work, which includes obtaining feedback from them—empathy is seen by Daniel Goleman as a key component of both “emotional intelligence” and “social intelligence”

Features of a positive mindset

Exercises to promote empathy and empathic communication: Some basic questions to consider
Would I want anyone to say or do to me what I have said or done to this student?
In anything I say or do with a student what do I hope to accomplish?
Am I saying or doing it in a way where the student feels respected and can truly hear what I have to say and respond constructively?

Features of a positive mindset

To understand the main characteristics of the mindset of resilient children and adolescents so that we can have guideposts for reinforcing this mindset in all of our interactions with challenging, angry students: Let's look at several of the main features of this mindset, all of which are interrelated

The mindset of resilient youth

To feel comfortable with and appreciate that others can be of support and help

To believe that one can solve problems and make decisions, which promotes a sense of personal control and ownership

The mindset of resilient youth

To define and reinforce one's strengths or "islands of competence" without denying or running from problematic areas

To believe that one can contribute to and make a positive difference in the world

The mindset of resilient youth

To possess self-discipline and self-control

To believe that mistakes are experiences from which to learn rather than feel humiliated
