

Examples of Phrases That Do and Do Not Promote a Nurturing Learning Environment

Do not say:	Instead, say:
"You have potential but don't use it."	"How can I help you reach your full potential?"
"I'm disappointed in you."	"What do you think you can do to make a more helpful decision the next time you are in a similar situation?"
"What did you say?"	Nothing
"If I do that for you, I'll have to do it for everyone."	"I'm not sure if I can do that, but I'll do my best to meet your needs in one way or another."
"It's against the rules."	"Let me see if there's a way to meet your need in a way that matches our school and classroom agreements."
"Your brother (or sister) . . ."	"We are all individuals . . ."
"I like the way Toby is sitting."	"Class, please sit down."
"You'll never amount to anything if you continue to . . ."	"I believe you will be successful, and I will support you to reach your goals."
"Who do you think you are?"	"How could you have been more respectful in that situation?"
"Don't you ever _____ (stop talking, listen, do your homework, try, care about your work)?"	What you feel directly
Anything sarcastic	What you feel directly
"I'm busy now."	"I'm very busy now, but you are very important to me. Unless this is an emergency, let's find a better time to talk. I really want to hear what's on your mind."
"The whole class will miss _____ unless someone admits to _____."	What you feel and need directly
"What is wrong with you?"	"I see we have a problem. Let's work together to find a solution."
"That's correct."	"Thanks! Do you have anything else to add? Does anybody else have anything to add?"
"You're so smart."	"You're making great progress! I've noticed how hard and well you've been working."
"You're a great artist (mathematician, writer, reader)."	"Your artistic (mathematics, writing, reading) skills are really improving. Why do you think that is?"