

Examine Your Mindsets

It's possible that you are wrestling with some of the ideas this book presents. Maybe you are not entirely comfortable discussing class, culture, race, and the power dynamic between teachers and students. Perhaps you are realizing that despite your best intentions, some aspect of your teaching, mindset, or natural relationship-building paradigm is keeping you from effectively building the life-altering relationships that empower all students to excel, reduce stress, and increase your work satisfaction. If you are getting frustrated, *relax*. Self-reflection is difficult and takes practice. We all struggle with this, which means we are learning and challenging ourselves!

It's equally likely that many of the ideas in the book are true for you. You may be relieved to know other teachers have struggled, yet successfully established both the no-nonsense and nurturing approaches in their classrooms by reflecting on their practices, as you are doing here.

Before moving on, it is important to reflect on your beliefs and attitudes and better understand the ways your mindsets are empowering or disempowering you and your students. While no one becomes a teacher to hold students back from doing their best, somehow over time, certain mindsets surface subconsciously. Now is the time to reflect and make any necessary changes to ensure your classroom is set up for success.

Review each disempowering and empowering mindset in the following chart. Honestly note where you fall with a checkmark next to the mindset that best represents your thinking. Then, take a minute to reflect on and answer the questions. As you answer, note a next step you will take to shift to a more empowered mindset.

What do I believe about setting expectations for my students?

| Disempowering | Empowering |
|--|---|
| I don't want to be mean or strict. | I need to be firm so my students know I care. |
| Mindset you want to work on (Are you working to improve the disempowering mindset, or are you eager to engage more often in the empowering mindset?) | |
| Who alone sets the tone for learning in my classroom and why does that matter? | |

One small step I will take to shift my mindset:

What do I believe about respect?

| Disempowering | Empowering |
|--|---|
| Students should respect me because I am the teacher. | I need to earn students' trust and respect. |

Mindset you want to work on (Are you working to improve the disempowering mindset, or are you eager to engage more often in the empowering mindset?)

Who is primarily responsible for establishing a mutually respectful culture in my classroom? Why is such a culture critical to me and my students' success?

One small step I will take to shift my mindset:

Do I believe *all* my students can achieve at high levels?

| Disempowering | Empowering |
|--|--|
| I can't expect students with so many challenges to achieve at high levels. | My students can achieve if I set a high bar and provide the support they need to reach it. |
| Mindset you want to work on (Are you working to improve the disempowering mindset, or are you eager to engage more often in the empowering mindset?) | |
| Who is primarily responsible for establishing high expectations in my classroom? Why are high expectations critical to me and my students' success? | |
| One small step I will take to shift my mindset: | |