

## **The Make Your Day Model**

**“No one has the right to interfere with the learning, safety or well-being of others.”**

**“Do what is expected and do it the best that you can.”**

This rule and these expectations summarize the philosophy of the Make Your Day program. It is based on the premise that every person within the school environment has the right to complete his or her responsibilities without interference from others. From a student's point of view, this means that they can expect a physically and emotionally safe school environment that is enhanced by a focus on learning. The students are able to communicate directly with those persons that are interfering with their learning in order to effect a change. Students are encouraged to help each other by communicating politely with the other person when an interfering behavior occurs. From the teacher's perspective, all behavioral interventions are couched in terms of interfering with another student's learning, safety or well-being, their own safety or well-being, or with the teacher's right to instruct in a physically and emotionally safe environment.

At the beginning of the school year, the classroom teacher and the students jointly agree to the schoolwide rule, which is also the classroom rule. This is accomplished through a guided examination of the underlying rationale of the need for rules and the consequences of "lawlessness." The outcome of this process is that students have discussed the need for rules in general, the benefit of a schoolwide rule, and have individually agreed that the schoolwide rule will provide a learning environment that keeps everyone safe with a focus on learning. This process results in students taking ownership of the school rule. Make Your Day is a collaborative program between students, teachers and parents, not an adult-imposed program.

Every staff member holds each student accountable to established school-wide standards. Consequences are clearly delineated and consistently enforced throughout the school environment. If a student is interfering with the learning, safety or well-being of others or their own safety or well-being, they are privately given permission to take time away from the current activity in order to process the consequences of their current behavior, its effect on those around them, and engage in problem-solving to resolve the difficulty. After a few minutes, they are privately asked if they need more time to be away from the current activity. If their answer is "No, I do not need more time." the student is given permission to return to the designated activities, whereas a "Yes, I need more time." simply indicates that the student requires additional time to reflect and/or to gather self-control. If a student is unable to gain self-control or engages in an extreme behavior, they are given permission to call their parents for a conference at school. This conference between the student and their parent, which is facilitated by the educator, is structured to give the student an opportunity to assess and take responsibility for their behavior, provide alternative choices for future situations, and indicate a readiness to return to the classroom. Acknowledging that the parent is more knowledgeable about their child, the parent makes the final decision as to whether they feel that their child is ready to return to the learning environment. These procedures are implemented without blaming, moralizing, or showing anger and the teacher speaks in a quiet, respectful tone when addressing the student. Throughout the school day, each student is cognizant that the consequences of their behavior, both positive and negative, result from their choices -- not arbitrary decisions by the school staff.

In order to evaluate if a student is "Doing what is expected and doing it the best that they can," they are provided with the opportunity to be involved in a self-peer-teacher evaluation of their efforts on an hourly basis, which is given substance by the earning of "Points." The emphasis in this component is on self-evaluation -- the ability to review one's personal effort in order to make a determination as to whether the classroom expectations were fulfilled to the best of their ability. For example, a student whose best effort is 65% accuracy on a given assignment is evaluated on equal footing with the student whose best effort is 98% accuracy. Students are not penalized for learning difficulties and they learn to accept individual differences in themselves and their peers. In order to take advantage of the powerful effect the peer group has on changing behavior, students are allowed to describe concisely to another student or the teacher how their right to learn or to be safe emotionally and physically may have been impacted. A teacher-monitored, brief verbal exchange takes place that allows the students to communicate their feelings and perceptions while resolving the issue. Teacher-modeling of this process by actively participating is considered essential to helping students learn how to evaluate their efforts, learn how their choices impact others, and learn how to advocate for themselves.

Burns (1990) describes the goals of the Make Your Day classroom management program as follows:

- 1.** To assist students in developing a sense of reality regarding the consequences of their behavior: a) to reward and encourage consistent learning behavior and, b) to reduce recognition for inappropriate or poor behavior.
- 2.** To teach and provide opportunities for students to exercise pertinent decision-making skills regarding their behavior.
- 3.** To affect covert as well as overt behavior, thereby helping students develop self-direction or autonomy in the control of their actions.
- 4.** To assist students in the development of, and to provide opportunity for, the use of relevant assertive social interaction skills. (p. 32)<sup>1</sup>

Another essential component of the Make Your Day model is that teachers are expected to consistently communicate with parents. Parents are encouraged to ask students about their day. If their child "made their day," the parents understand that school expectations were met and that their child gave their best effort. Students and teachers are expected to honestly reflect their efforts in their points, which means that no one will "make their day" all of the time. Students that do not "make their day" bring home a form that describes minor behaviors that impacted their day. This provides the parents with an opportunity to discuss the choices their child made along with generating alternative strategies that could help them be more successful the next time they encounter the same situation. The intent is that the child will learn from this experience, using their mistakes as a tool to make adjustments. The school does not expect parents to administer a consequence because the purpose of the form is to proactively address minor unwanted behaviors. Educators, parents, and students are encouraged to focus on the "process" of performing to the best of one's ability, rather than the "product" of making their day. Mistakes, both behavioral and academic, are simply a learning opportunity. After briefly discussing the happenings of the previous day with their parents, parents sign the form, and the student returns it the next day.

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<sup>1</sup> Burns, J. W. (1990). An evaluation of the make your day program of student management. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff.