

the core of the child as bad and sets us up to punish instead of teach. The child then has two options: To accept the fact that he is indeed a bad child or try to defend his self-worth by engaging in a power struggle.

When we set aside punitive approaches and see difficult behavior as a call for help, we free ourselves to set limits and teach new skills in a healthy manner. Sometimes we mistakenly believe acting from the Power of Love means we will be permissive. Was I permissive in my approach with the boy spraying graffiti? No! The Power of Love allows us to reflect a compassionate motive to the child who is struggling, helping him claim ownership and clarity for his actions. My loving intent helped the boy reflect on the root of his anger. He worked with the coach on a plan that included attending a different study hall to help him be more successful and connected at the school, and he was held accountable for the spray-painting by cleaning it up during in-school suspension. Personal responsibility can only be cultivated, not coerced or forced, and is required before a child can choose to change his behavior or learn new skills. The Power of Love has the ability to turn even the most difficult children around, transforming aggressive or withdrawn children into cooperative members of the School Family.

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DJ Batiste was a powerful gang leader when his teacher planted a seed of potential within him through positive intent. He is now employed, in college and part of the Conscious Discipline team, traveling the country to inspire teachers and troubled youth to see their inner potential. Watch another video about DJ's transformation.

Negative intent sees a child as unworthy. From this perception, a child has a choice to accept the belief that he is unworthy or fight to maintain his self-worth. Children who defend their worth will engage in a power struggle in efforts to make the other person the unworthy one. This struggle is always a lose-lose proposition, as both parties will attack and defend in efforts to maintain their worth.

There is another way: positive intent sees every child as a seed of potential. From this perception, the child has the choice to accept his inherent worth or fight against it. A child who has experienced years of negative intent may, at first, fight against the notion that he is worthy, loveable and capable. Patient and consistent use of positive intent is required to help these troubled seeds grow and bloom.

**Commitment:** I am willing to use the Power of Love to see the best in at least two challenging children this year. I understand that by seeing others compassionately, I do not let them off the hook; I simply invite the possibility of self-reflection, solutions and change instead of punishment and blame.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*The Power of Love sees a call for help and a seed of potential in children who are being hurtful toward themselves and others.*