

**Teaching Indian Boys**

**Interactive Training Modules**

**Role Models**

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# **Teaching Indian Boys**

## **Interactive Training Modules**

**Teaching Indian Boys Self-paced training for teachers**

Created by Michael Auden © 2015

Email: [Michael@michaelauden.com.au](mailto:Michael@michaelauden.com.au)

Web: [www.educatedboy.com](http://www.educatedboy.com)

## **Role Models**

Boys enjoy being with other boys - and there is nothing wrong with that. They have fun together in an energetic vivid way that helps them develop into confident human beings. The trouble is that with male friends you often learn to have to put girls down to be cool - something which carries through into later life. Too often a boy feels obliged to hide his feelings - about a girl he likes, for example, or about his best friend - under a show of careless bravado.

At some ages it is common for boys to band together and dismiss things and people which are different. This means that some of their fun lies in sexist, racist or anti-gay jokes, and it is up to all of us to have the courage to say that such jokes or jibes are unacceptable, whether we are 14 or 44 years old.

Thank you for being a positive role model whom I can admire and learn from.

### **Emotionally Strong Boys**

How do we help our boys express their feelings and grow up to be unafraid of them? How do we help them understand that they can be masculine — and have feelings too? How do we help them survive the tests of masculinity intact and on their own terms?

- A.** Healthy psychological development is typically marked by progressive acquisition and integration of new skills and qualities.
- B.** In contrast, traditional male socialization reflects a process of disconnection marked by successive “disavowing” and loss of qualities essential to boys’ emotional and psychological well-being.
- C.** The lack of emotional connection is often mixed with a sense of privilege, power, and entitlement that stems from traditional masculine ideals.

- D. Boys often are not taught the language of feelings. They frequently use the expression of anger to show frustration, sadness, rejection, and other emotions.
- E. Understanding the language of feelings helps boys to distinguish between anger and other emotions.
- F. Understanding their inner lives empowers boys; it does not make them weak.

## **Strategies**

Give boys permission to have an internal life, approval for the full range of human emotions, and help in developing an emotional vocabulary so that they may better understand themselves and communicate more effectively with others.

Recognize and accept the high activity level of boys and give them safe boy places to express it. Boys are tremendously sensitive to adults who do not have a reasonable tolerance level for boy energy, and when they do sense that a person has a low threshold of boy tolerance, they usually respond to it as a challenge...

Talk to boys in their language — in a way that honours their pride and their masculinity.

*Use discipline to build character and conscience, not enemies.*

Boys need discipline that is clear, consistent, and not harsh.

## **Thank you for being a man I can respect.**

### **Model a manhood of emotional attachment.**

"Boys imitate what they see. If what they see is emotional distance, guardedness, and coldness between men, they grow up to emulate that behaviour...The loneliness of men has to be addressed in the lives of boys. Boys need to be encouraged to initiate friendships, maintain them, and experience the conflicts that arise in male friendships from

different levels of athletic skill, from teasing, and from competition for the attention of girls. Too often boys lack both the resources and the will to resolve those conflicts and preserve friendships."

### **Teach boys that there are many ways to be a man.**

"Very few boys or men are tall, handsome, athletic, successful with women, endlessly virile, and physically fearless...Boys suffer from a too-narrow definition of masculinity, and it is time to re-examine that message...We have to teach boys that there are many ways to become a man; that there are many ways to be brave, to be a good father, to be loving and strong and successful. We need to celebrate the natural creativity and risk taking of boys, their energy, their boldness. We need to praise the artist and the entertainer, the missionary and the athlete, the soldier and the male nurse, the store owner and the round-the-world sailor, the teacher and the CEO. There are many ways for a boy to make a contribution in this life."

### **Thank you for helping me express my inner feelings.**

#### **Hiding Their Tender Selves**

- Boys who subscribe to a very narrow definition of masculinity, who empathize only with toughness, stoicism, and physical and sexual prowess may hide those parts of themselves that they perceive as too tender and even too smart.
- Many boys hide their feelings. Boys often think it's OK for girls to get upset and be sensitive, but not for strong boys. As a result, boys may act less empathetic, less supportive, and less close than they actually feel or want to be. "Crying is a roadblock to being accepted and identified as a strong male. So one of the first things people do is teach boys not to cry," comments Geoffrey Canada.
- Some boys hide their intelligence. "Boys may also choose to do less well in school, because they think that learning and homework are something that girls do," notes Thompson. "For some boys (and this depends a lot on social class and context), doing well at school is incompatible with being perceived as adequately masculine," adds Joseph Tobin. "If a boy gets praised for good academic performance in front of classmates, he may

- then misbehave to earn back their respect for his masculinity."
- Boys hide their compassion as well. "Boys live in fear of being identified as soft so they self-correct," says Canada. "A nice girl comes up to you and compliments you for helping her little brother, but other boys say, 'You did what?' So, as leaders, we try to get boys away from this group, so they explore what they feel and care about — but they won't do this in front of other boys."
  - \* Show boys it's OK to feel your feelings. "Boys begin to turn off their emotions in the process of transforming themselves into the kinds of hypothetical males they want to be. Part of our jobs as men is to continue to talk with boys about how they feel and how we feel," adds Canada. We need to begin to share that men do cry and that this has nothing to do with your masculinity. We need to explain to boys that developing their emotional lives will allow them to be better men, to be well-rounded, more mature, better able to raise a family and keep a job; that they've been sold a bill of goods around maleness that has hampered many of them."

## **Thank you for showing me that I am OK; that I can like myself.**

### **Helping pupils who don't believe in themselves**

Personal self-esteem is important for everyone (including ourselves). Human nature being what it is, there will always be a proportion of pupils who (sometimes for very complex reasons) underestimate themselves. Don't think that you can solve the world's problems by yourself! You'll have too many of your own at first. You may wish to concentrate on teaching and surviving yourself in the early stages! However, some suggestions on how to help pupils with low self-esteem are given below.

- Capitalize on their successes. Remind yourself about how self-belief usually comes through success. Try to ensure that pupils who have a self-esteem problem are given things to do in which they will demonstrably succeed. It can help to break something

up into more manageable tasks where such pupils can succeed, before going on to the next stage.

- Be aware of sensitivity when giving feedback. Take particular care when giving feedback to pupils who may be sensitive because of a self-esteem problem. Avoid the use of any negative 'final language', including such words as 'not satisfactory', or 'wrong'.
- Help pupils identify their strengths. Help pupils who are feeling low on self-esteem by reminding them about things that you already know they are good at, and where you can point to evidence which convinces them of their achievements.
- Help pupils accept their weaknesses. Encourage pupils to regard weaknesses as not-yet- developed strengths. Help them to believe that the fact that they can't yet do a thing does not mean they can never do it.
- Show that weaknesses are really opportunities to grow. Suggest that pupils regard weaknesses as opportunities rather than threats. Show them that being aware of a weakness is in itself a strength, and a cause for positive self-esteem.
- Suggest that low self-esteem is part of anyone's normal life at times. Remind pupils that most people go through periods of low self-esteem as a perfectly normal and natural part of growing up and developing. Where possible, give illustrations of your own feelings and approaches during such times.
- Help pupils find out what makes them tick. Do a group exercise with pupils, asking- 'What sorts of things make you feel good about yourself?' Several pupils may discover positive factors about themselves that they had not consciously thought of before.
- Help pupils to share feelings. Encourage pupils to go public with (at least some of) their feelings. This will need handling with sensitivity and tact. For example, have a 'feelings washing line' at the side of a classroom, where pupils can peg a piece of paper saying how they feel today and why.
- Devise tasks where pupils will succeed. Have a stock of small useful tasks you can give out to pupils who need a boost in their self-esteem tasks which you know they can succeed at, and which will be seen by others to have been useful and successful.

- Don't forget your own feelings. Monitor your own self-esteem, and the contributing factors and circumstances. We never stop learning about how our own minds and emotions function.

## **Thank you for helping me understand about being responsible.**

### **Rules are meant to control, not to inspire.**

Rules are necessary in games. Between people, however, rules result in adversarial relationships because rules require enforcement. In addition, rules are often stated in negative terms and imply an imposed consequence if not followed.

Rules place the teacher in the position of the enforcer, a cop, wearing a blue uniform with copper buttons—rather than that of a teacher, coach, mentor, facilitator of learning, or educator.

Enforcing rules often results in power struggles that rarely result in win-win situations or good relationships. In fact, they often result in reluctance, resistance, resentment, rebellion, and even retaliation.

Upon analysis, you will see that rules are either procedures or expectations. Rather than relying on rules, therefore, you will be much more effective if you teach procedures, which is the essence of good classroom management.

Rules are "left-hemisphere" oriented. They work with people who are orderly and structured. "Right-hemisphere" dominant students act randomly and spontaneously. Teaching procedures--rather than relying on rules--is significantly more effective with this type of student.

Rules aim at obedience, but obedience does not create desire.

Also, communicate by painting pictures of what you WANT, not what you don't want. If you tell a person what you do not want, the person immediately visualizes the opposite because the brain visualizes; it does not picture text or words.

Therefore, instead of posting "Rules" that focus on obedience, consider posting "Responsibilities" that empower and elevate.

## **Responsibilities**

Have my materials

Be where I belong

Follow directions

Do my assignments

Be kind to others

## **Thank you for helping me to talk with you.**

### **Getting pupils to talk to you**

When pupils are talking to you, you have their undivided attention.

The more you can get them to do the talking, the more learning they will achieve.

- Invite questions from individual pupils by name. Give them the chance to explain more about their questions, so that everyone becomes interested in the answers.
- Make full use of the questions pupils ask. Ask the class if anyone is willing or able to answer a question which a pupil has asked. Give volunteers every encouragement to answer.
- Don't 'put down' incorrect answers from pupils. Gently confirm that the answers are not yet quite correct, and invite further replies from any pupils who have further ideas.
- Ask questions in an interesting way. Make it appear that you really don't yet know what the answers may be. Draw the answers out of pupils, by asking them leading questions, which help them to arrive at sensible answers.
- Encourage pupils to contribute their own questions. Help pupils themselves to think of the questions that the class needs to address. If the class 'owns' the questions, more pupils will be interested in the answers to them.
- Be available as an expert witness. Arrange one-to-one times, where any pupil can come to you, and ask you anything, or tell you anything. Use what they ask or tell you as an agenda for future class discussions or activities.
- Be someone who can find someone who knows. Make it clear to pupils that they can ask you (or tell you) about anything at all, but

that you can't be expected to know all the answers - but you can find someone who does.

- Let pupils into selected parts of your world. Talk to classes about 'shareable' things in your own life from time to time, to help the pupils appreciate that you too have feelings and emotions. But handle personal anecdotes with care; it's easy to become boring,
- Accept silly questions. When pupils ask 'silly' questions, or say 'silly' things, treat them as perfectly reasonable questions or comments, encouraging other pupils to ask questions or make comments.
- Bring everyone in. Identify those pupils who don't ask questions or give comments, and try to draw them into discussions, for example by giving them the responsibility for taking charge of a group discussion of a matter arising from a question that has already been asked.

## **Thank you for bringing other men into our classroom to learn from.**

### **Using Mentoring as a means to influence Boys' Feelings and Behaviours**

The challenge for boys in today's world is greater than ever. Boys have too few positive role models and far too many negative examples of masculinity. Gangs, drugs, Internet pornography, and teen pregnancies compound this critical time in a young man's life. Too many good boys get caught up in a path they may not have chosen if they had a mentor to help see options, weigh consequences and make positive choices.

- Divorce rates are over 50%
- Over 40% of families are single parent with mum as head of the household.
- Boys are seeking honour and respect through threats and acts of violence. When a young man takes a risk, he is begging for attention.
- Use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs continues to be a rite of passage for many boys.

- Boys suffer from sadness, fear and anger in a culture of cruelty and are taught not to express their feelings
- Fewer healthy mature men are taking on a mentoring role to guide and nurture boys

**Your challenge is to:**

- Build self esteem
- Provide a unique and safe place where boys can interact with committed, conscientious men
- Encourage boys to be men of honour. To seek and speak the truth.
- Help boys discover and develop their individual strengths, talents and gifts.
- Mentor positive male role models
- Challenge boys to live lives of responsible action and make a meaningful impact in the world.
- Teach boys how to resolve conflicts and ask for forgiveness.
- Support boy's dreams to find a personal mission
- Praise the greatness in each boy.
- Give boys hope, confidence and courage.
- Develop a program that addresses core issues facing adolescent boys.

**Boys act out for a reason. Once that reason is revealed, they are better able to make conscious choices.**

Teacher Quick Write

- Think of ways that your school might use mentoring/role models as a way to positively influence male students.

## Two Page Plan – Men Teaching Boys

*Make a list of the ways you enjoy being a male teacher of boys*

*What tips have you learned in this session that would help you understand boys?*

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

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