



Be A Relationship Coach

Relationship coaches take advantage of dysregulated behavioral interactions to provide supportive feedback to students on how their actions can be relationally damaging, and teach alternative responses for building and maintaining healthy relationships. This is essentially applying a teaching framework to teacher-student relationships. Being a relationship coach means holding yourself accountable to being in a developmental relationship with students: although both students and teachers have relational responsibilities, the educator has greater power, emotional maturity, insight, and foresight into relationship building.

As the relationship coach, you are the mature partner in the relationship who assumes primary responsibility for building and maintaining positive relationships. This means that when students engage in ways that damage the relationship, you are responsible for showing the student how to restore the relationship and providing them with tangible opportunities for restoration. This is in contrast to the passive approach that places the initial steps toward repairing the relationship on the student. In the passive approach, the educator's position is to wait until the student initiates restorative actions.

Being a relationship coach is foremost about developing a **relational mindset**. **Every** interaction that you have with a student is contributing to building a relationship that is either positive and supportive, neutral, or harmful and negative. A relational mindset prioritizes the teacher-student relationship when considering all aspects of teaching and learning. A relational mindset seeks opportunities to build relationships, views corrective moments as opportunities for relationship strengthening and leverages relationships to motivate. What follows is a list of principles of a relational mindset with examples of each principle in action.

Principles of a Relational Mindset

1. Expressing belief that students can engage in positive change

- E.g.: Completed Behavioral Request Loop: State the undesired behavior, state the desired replacement behavior, and state your affirmation of the belief that the student can engage in the desired behavior
- E.g.: 5:1 Positive feedback ratio

2. Being mindful of student dignity and identity during behavioral correction

- E.g.: Using non-verbal signals to intentionally reduce extent to which students feel singled out and shamed in front of peers

3. Preserving and promoting positive identity by intentionally correcting the behavior not the individual

- E.g.: Using "I and We" statements when making behavioral requests

4. Active steps for letting go of negative interaction and communicating positive intentions to student

- E.g.: Greeting students at the door (1st thing you say when you see students is positive)
- E.g.: Restorative conversations and apologizing

5. Integrating relationship building into academic instruction

- E.g.: Increasing opportunity to respond and questioning techniques

6. Communicating behavioral requests and rules in ways that helps students to understand that it is due to care for rather than control of the student

- E.g.: Private, emotionally safe re-directions (no calling out names)
- E.g.: Emotionally Safe Communication: tone of voice, volume, phrasing that brings students in, not push away