



## Transcript- Episode 61

F%\$# You! Now What?

OK, if there are little ears listening, you're going to want to change this podcast or turn it off right now.

Yeah, I mean, it's PG-13 at least. Yeah, because we're going to go ahead and share with you the title of the episode is F%\$# You, Now What?

And we are going there because if you've been in any classroom long enough, you know that there are moments like this that shock you, where small children will swear at you, where large humans will swear at you, and you are taken completely off guard.

And what I love about today's podcast is we have something to help you do several things.

One, deal with your own emotions about what's happening, or at least identify your own emotions about what's happening. And two, build your own response plan.

So why is that critical, Kristie, that they build their own response plan and we don't just say, here's exactly what to do?

Well, I was thinking, as we said, that it was a PG-13, or if there were small ears around, turn it off.

I was even thinking like what anyone's emotional reaction can be to the F word, right? And I think some people are super comfortable. Some people go, oh, it's a matter of semantics. Some people that I grew up with that were highly religious would say, you know, something like fudge you, you know, like everybody knows what you're saying, but you're using a word.

And so like having your own plan kind of helps you understand what you're going to do, because it might mean, it might be funny if you're four, and it might be horrific if they're 14. Do you know what I mean? Like it depends on where you are, who's watching, how you feel about the words, not just the F word, but all kinds of swearing. So that's how I think of it, Julie, is like how my own nervous system is going to react to it.

I need a plan that works for me. I can't just go, well, Julie, what do you think? Because you're going to be like, whatever. And I'll be like, but that doesn't make me feel calm.

That's what I would say. I love that, Kristie. And so today, when you're thinking about, you know, the topic, which is really just somebody, a kid does something super shocking to you. And it could be a four-year-old yelling, shut up, and flipping a chair over.

Yeah, for sure. Shut up would trigger me just the same way.

Or a 10th grader who's like, fuck this class, and walks out of the room. Either way, you're just a little bit stunned. And what we want you to remember is, first and foremost, it's okay to have a response.

You might feel shock, or embarrassment, or anger, or this pressure to respond right now. For me, because I used to work with kids with the most challenging behavior in schools, this happened more times than I'd like to admit. And I struggled because I kept thinking, everyone saw that.

Or I better shut this down right now. Or sometimes, Kristie, my thought was like, I better punish this kid in a public way right now so everybody knows this is not okay. I would even say, Julie, I would say, like, feelings are hurt.

Yeah. That's so true. Oh, my gosh.

You know, that kind of like, I thought, I don't know. Yeah. It's a little bit of a trust is broken because of your job.

You're thinking to yourself, I thought we were doing better than this.

Yeah. Yeah.

And here's where we are.

Yeah. Right.

And so what we want to reinforce for you is all those feelings, normal, okay, good, good, good. And we want to move you away from the instinct of punishment and move you towards something else. Right?

Okay.

So, let's talk. I got to say two things about the word punishment really quick.

Okay.

I think when I feel like punishing people, it's below my threshold of awareness, and I wouldn't recognize it as punishment, meaning I, my feelings are hurt. And so, like, you go to even the score or you withdraw because you're so hurt by that person, but that you're withdrawing ends up punishing them. Do you know what I mean?

Wow. Yeah, I do. So like, that was my first thought was like, I don't, I don't seek punishment. I'm not that kind of, and I'm like, oh yes, I do have a scorecard.

Oh yes, my feelings are hurt. Oh yes, I'm going to probably withdraw, which will end up punishing, you know, maybe I'll just say that for now. Well, I love that Kristie, because punishment comes in so many forms.

And you're kind of talking about a subconscious reaction and behavior that would end up punishing. So I really want people to keep that in mind.

Yes.

And I want you to go all the way to a conscious, you've just lost minutes off recess.

Right. Good point.

You are now going to ISS. You now, this is a phone call home. I'll be talking to your mother in a minute, whatever, right? Those are the range of punishments that we as educators are likely to go to in that moment because these embarrassing behaviors cause us to need to react in a way that's just like sometimes not really, really thought out.

And what I mean is, if you read the research on punishment, which we've done and you don't even have to do it, or you can, but you'll learn that what punishment does is it shuts down communication, it increases power struggles, and it damages trust. So what we think is going to work, quote unquote, or at least save face for us, actually is more damaging than other options. So we're going to talk about those other options later.

And so I guess I can share some of the options right now because I think it, yeah, I think it's okay, but it's just like what instead you might do is think about boundaries, not retaliation, relationship over your reaction, and a pause instead of a power play. So essentially, we're asking you in this moment to do something incredibly hard, please know, we know it's incredibly hard, but it's to think, what's a boundary I could put in place? How do I keep the relationship as more important than my reaction? And how might I pause instead of doing something that is a power play, like see you in ISS, right? And if you don't know, that means in-school suspension.

Yay.

And just thinking about having to actually do these, and I'm, you know, frowning, but I'm thinking, Julie, like, let's say the kid, you know, like it's a verbal slap, basically, when a kid says this. And so you might react like you would if someone went to slap you. You might, like, grab their hand because you're just so surprised.

Right. So you might yell back or you might do all those things you just mentioned. So if you find yourself reacting because you're human, then I guess come back to this list and go, OK, as part of my repair or as part of my sort of getting back to trust, then I got to restate my boundary.

I have to restate that the relationship is still my priority. So I feel like even if we didn't do it in the exact very moment, there's an opportunity in the repair part of it. That's right.

So Kristie's kind of inviting us to go, hey, let's say you react like a human. Let's say, let's imagine, I'm just in case you ask me. In case you react in a way that you're just not like, well, that take one was not great.

There is, we're going to talk about repair, too, and just kind of thinking about the repair process.

True, true. OK.

Yeah. I was just thinking like, oh, I don't know that I could get ahead of it.

Oh, yeah.

I mean, I feel like I must be very practiced in it and that I really think that might be it, because, if I told you what happened a hundred times in my teaching career, I wouldn't be exaggerating.

Right.

And remember that I worked with the most challenging kids with behavior from high school, middle school, elementary school, and it's like we're going to see this, we're going to experience it, and we have to desensitize ourselves a bit to it.

So we have some mantras that I want to talk about and then some actions or words to say. OK, so my favorite mantra that I used to work with my parents about is this is not personal.

So when you said the slap, I really like that, Kristie, because a slap is wildly personal, it is directed at you, it is intended to hurt you. And I'm going to say that swearing is less so.

Right.

It's said out loud. It's not necessarily aimed at you. It's probably the tip of the iceberg and there's so much going on underneath it.

So this is not personal is a favorite one. I can handle this. Connection over correction, the story is bigger than this moment.

Those are my favorite mantras that can really help. I used to have it's not personal written down on a note card and it was a really pretty font and it said it's not personal. And just like that really helped me remember that I'm working with kids who've had significant trauma, have just a very different life experience.

And the more I personalize it, the worse it is for us. And I will say as we move into the actions, I'll say two things. One, this particular podcast is like, the offspring of a session that we have in [Behavior 360](#), so if you're really curious about going deeper, we also have a what if scenario in [Behavior 360](#) about what if they swear, what if they hit, what if they run, et cetera, et cetera. So just know that we're just, again, touching on the topic to start the conversation. I'll also say when it comes to some of the actions that we're going to suggest, maybe an overarching theme for me.

And Julie, you know, I'm always trying to find a stepping stone for people who may not be as desensitized to it yet or as open-hearted as you are in your practice. That sometimes just anything you can do to neutralize or be neutral is really a win win. It doesn't mean that I'm, I don't want to send mixed messages, especially for kids with trauma, that it's apathy or that I don't care.

I'm just trying to not make my response be too much, that's like, feels inauthentic to me, like too sweet or something. I don't know why. I must just be like, I don't know, don't have a heart, but I guess they called me the ice cream for some reason, right? But so maybe not neutral, but maybe the word is neutralize, whatever that is for you and for that student.

Okay. Yeah. So we're going to give you seven quick months, sorry, quick actions to take.

And I think Kristie's right to get nervous about some of them to go, oh, what if? I'm just doing it for you, friends. Yeah, Kristie for you. That's the role she's playing, but I like number one quite a lot, which is ignore and address later.

That means do nothing, ignore, and address later. It gives you a minute, 10 minutes, 20 minutes, till next period. However you want to look at it to be like, I'm figuring out what I'm going to do now.

I'm not figuring out how I'm going to punish this human. I'm figuring out how can I reconnect?

Oh yeah. Kristie's like, perfect.

No. How can I reconnect with this human? How can we repair? How can we come back? All right. I'm going to give you some phrases that I love.

I'm not mad. What do you need? Or, hey, let's step out together. Or, let's talk about this after class.

Or, it sounds like you're overwhelmed. Let's regroup. Or, do you want to grab water or sit down for a bit? And the seventh one is very much like the first one.

Silence paired with calm present. It's like ignore and address later or do nothing. But instead, it's you working on your own regulation.

So literally, you just at this moment, take some breath, get yourself really calm. Then you can make a decision about what to do next. I knew you couldn't make it through without telling me to breathe.

Friends, you're going to have to breathe through this work. It's just going to be a thing. You're going to have to get used to it.

There's more podcasts about that. But again, we're kind of like telling you some secret sauce without sending you to cooking school first. So if we're going to make you have to create something like what is a beurre blanc, a sauce, I don't know.

I think. A Bernese, a Bernese, Bernese maybe is the word. I don't know.

I saw it on, with Gordon Ramsay. So I was just thinking like we're kind of telling you something secret or advanced, which seems simple without sending you to cooking school, which is like our [Behavior 360](#), like you need to hear the whole story to understand why these mantras and actions are actually effective and don't sound like we've lost our minds.

Okay.

But we're going to keep moving on. Julie, did you want to tell anything about the repair or move to the handout?

Uh, let's just jump to the handout. If they want the repair processes and [Behavior 360](#), but excellent.

The handout is build your own response plan. And I love it so, so, so much. So KPF, tell people what this is.

Okay. First, you can, you can pause or get it later. It's at [inclusiveschooling.com/download61](https://inclusiveschooling.com/download61).

And it's sort of like what to do in the moment, but you're getting prepared for the moment. So any of you who like to soothe their anxiety by being highly organized, this will help you think through some of those difficult situations that are going to happen and make a plan. I would also say, Julie, you've mentioned your co-teachers and your paraprofessionals a couple of times.

This can also, even though it's your own response plan, it could be your team's response plan. I love that. Thinking about it as a conversation and a connected, a connective task to do together.

Okay. And so, okay. So there's five sections and then like a little closing thought.

We'll just highlight what's in each section. And again, you can download, it's kind of like a little worksheet actually that you and/or your team can fill out together, maybe even separately so that you understand how you're going to come together with different nervous systems, but you can get the download at [inclusiveschooling.com/download61](https://inclusiveschooling.com/download61). And let's talk about the five sections.

Yeah. KPF, why don't you go through the five sections for us? Okay. I'll start.

And so the first section is just knowing yourself. Sometimes we don't even understand that that was something that how I feel about it, like, was I feeling like out of control or that the class was going to go out of control, that I think the students thought that I wasn't in control, but before they thought I was, things like that. The second one is how will I self-regulate?

So Julie said, breathe. I probably won't. I might write the word pause, which is the same thing, but it just feels better to my nervous system. So we give you a couple of examples.

What are your go-to connection phrases? Remember we said you want to feel authentic. So in those seven action statements that Julie gave just a minute ago, we've given you a few more examples, but we want you to brainstorm. What would you say in this moment? And the one I like is we both need a minute.

So I don't have to say anything about what, what the rule is or how I feel about it. And I can let the kid know, Hey, something's up here. I need a minute, but I'm coming back to it.

And my favorite couple, my favorite, I just want to say is I got mad. What do you need? That's my favorite because, but I said we had to be authentic. So I was like, I couldn't pick that one.

No, but I did. I'm telling you mine.

I know. Okay. Go ahead and, and go through the rest of it.

Okay. Your safe face strategy. So I like this part because it's about like, yeah, that was hard. And yeah, that did feel disrespectful.

And yeah, that was a little bit of a shocker or whatever it was. So how do you want to feel confident in the moment without throwing the student under the bus? So you want to still honor their dignity, but let yourself regain as well. After the moment, when everything's maybe calmed down, it's about relationships and reconnecting with the student.

As Julie said, it could be another class period. It could be five seconds later. It could be whatever makes sense given the age and the schedule.

It can also be what support do you need? So you might need to debrief with your co-teacher. You might need to text someone and just say how it felt. Listen to a favorite song.

And then there's all the, the handout ends with just some kind of a final thought, if you will. The final thought is punishment might make the behavior disappear, but it also makes the student disappear. So that's it for Episode 61 called F%\$# You.

Now what? I'll remember your power in these moments is not about having the right comeback, it's about responding in a way that keeps dignity and connection alive. Don't forget to grab your own response plan. And if you want more of this in [Behavior 360](#), we've got you covered.

So you can check that out until next time. Keep breathing, keep your sense of humor, and keep showing up for students. No matter what they throw at you.

Thank you for tuning in and don't forget to subscribe and catch up on past episodes, where we share valuable insights, straight talk, and practical steps to challenge outdated special education practices, you can find every episode with the show notes at [inclusiveschooling.com/inclusion-podcast](https://www.inclusiveschooling.com/inclusion-podcast) to build more inclusive schools together.

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## SHOW NOTES

### Key Takeaways

- Swearing and explosive language almost always signal a **nervous system in crisis**, not intentional disrespect.
- Your nervous system reacts too — shock, embarrassment, pressure to act—so having a plan prevents reactive punishment.
- Punishment may silence the moment but damages trust, escalates power struggles, and disconnects the student from you.
- Responding with boundaries, honesty, and calm presence helps you maintain dignity — for yourself and the student.
- Repair afterward matters just as much as the initial response.

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### Episode Download

This fill-in-the-blank tool helps you create a **personalized script and strategy** for moments when a student swears, yells, storms out, or lashes out.

Inside you'll find:

- A section to identify what *activates* you in these moments
- Options for self-regulation you can commit to
- Space to write your own authentic connection phrases
- A “save-face” strategy so you stay grounded without shaming the student
- Guidance for reconnecting and repairing after things calm down

👉 Download at [inclusiveschooling.com/download61](https://www.inclusiveschooling.com/download61)

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### Practical Tips

- **Name your internal reaction privately.** Acknowledge your shock or hurt so it doesn't leak out as punishment.
- **Pause before responding.** Silence + calm presence is often the safest first move.
- **Use neutralizing language.** Phrases like "Let's take a minute," or "We'll talk after class," stop escalation.
- **Choose relationship over reaction.** Focus on reconnection, not retaliation or forced consequences.
- **Give the student (and yourself) space.** Step aside, breathe, or allow the moment to pass before addressing it.
- **Repair intentionally.** After things settle, open the door with:
  - "That was a big moment. Want to talk about what was going on?"
  - "You're not in trouble — we just need to figure this out together."
- **Seek support for yourself.** Debrief with a colleague, step outside, journal, or reset your nervous system.

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