Discipline with Dignity:  
Curwin and Mendler  

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Theorists Richard L. Curwin and Allen N. Mendler are the founders of the classroom management plan entitled Discipline with Dignity. This management plan entails many important points but essentially establishes a social contract between the teacher and class. They take insight from theorist Glasser, of not destroying children’s will to learn through discipline. Not only is a contract decided by teacher and students but the consequences to discipline problems are made together as well. Three points are essential to this plan including: prevention, action dimension, and resolution. This theory is not a quick fix but rather focuses on long-term behavior changes.

Some ideas I find appealing in this discipline theory are the theories in which it is based on. Teachers must never embarrass students when carrying out the consequences of the contract. This is supposed to be done in private and this way the child does not feel defeated by the mocking of his/her peers. Another aspect that I appreciate in Curwin and Mendler’s plan is that prevention is a main agent in the management plan. By preventing problems, the teacher will spend less time implementing consequences and more time teaching. Preplanning is thinking about the activities the class will be doing and thinking ways in which students will have difficulty and trying to eliminate them. My personal philosophy has a lot to do with respecting the children and one of my personal goals is not to embarrass them as I do not like to be embarrassed myself. Another component of my personal management plan comes from Harry Wong. Mendler and Curwin’s ideas remind me of Wong’s because he is ad emit about preventing problems by having set procedures. I am drawn to this theory because of the similarity.
One aspect Curwin and Mendler’s plan that I don’t quite agree with is the fact that students are able to choose their own consequence. I do not feel that this is appropriate because at time students do not know what is best for them. As an experienced and studied adult I feel that I have the ability to make a decision such as this for the student. However, I am not opposed to suggestions from the student; I feel as the teacher I have the ultimate decision.

After reviewing several studies of the model, I believe that it is a practical theory to be used in the classroom. It is not too difficult to understand and it has good basic concepts. Prevention is always key in my mind and this method definitely takes hold of that concept. I also feel that the students will enjoy being part of the discipline control process and will strive to be better students because they had a say in the process. As a teacher, using this model will bring much success because it requires the teacher to be consistent, kind and well-practiced.