We are all a product of our imagination... our perceptions and thoughts, I’m not just saying that to sound cool... !!!

“Our perception of the world changes through life and yet the ‘world’ has not changed, but how we see it has !!”

I guess the job of teachers and parents is to get them to see that before it’s too late.

“Students need to take a positive view of what can be done - NOT a negative view of what can’t !!”

It’s easier said than done... because what they believe (in their own minds) to be true... will typically not help them move forward.

So, when you tell the student that ‘you’re happy with their quality of work’... they could be in one of two ways.... firstly, thinking negatively...

“Yeah, but you’re just saying that to make me feel better !” (they think you’re patronising them)

“Thanks for saying that, but I don’t quite agree !!” (I’m not in agreement)

“HHhhmmmm - yeah but, she’s (someone else) got a better mark than me !!” (they did better)

“Well if it was that good - why didn’t I get top marks?” (the result is all that matters)

“Great - I can relax and do nothing now !!” (I’m a bit lazy)

So, what you say can be totally misconstrued... and mean something totally different to what they are actually thinking.

Alternatively... and more positively when you say that ‘you’re happy with their quality of work’ they could be thinking...

“Great - thanks for that” (grateful)

“That’s good news and I know how I can do better” (sees positive steps to doing better)

Some students see things in such a way that it tempers their view of the world, making them almost impossible to teach because they’re looking for an excuse to do nothing or just disagree...

The belief

1. ‘The world is a mess’ - which means - “What’s the point even trying?”
2. ‘Exams are really tough’ - which means - “I’ll not bother revising”
3. ‘Teachers are boring’ - which means - “I’m not interested in what they have to say”

Want to know what to do? - READ Page 2 & 3
The belief

1. ‘This has nothing to do with my future job’ - which means - “I think I’ll do nothing”
2. ‘You need to be lucky to be successful’ - which means - “I’m hoping to be lucky”
3. ‘I’ve done OK so far’ - which means - “I’ll probably be OK in the future too”
4. ‘My parents don’t get me’ - which means - “I won’t listen to them”
5. ‘You can always do re-sits’ - which means “So, I’ll see how it goes and wait till then”
6. ‘You have to know people to be successful’ - which means - “...and I know no-one, so I won’t be !!”

We need to change ‘IMPOSSIBLE’ into ‘I’m Possible’
To do this... they need to connect emotionally with their learning and it’s NOT ALL about the subject !!

Building Confidence and being Positive

1. Show enthusiasm
2. Pay interest and make it personalised - try avoid thanking the ‘whole class’ - it feels insincere and as though you're thanking ‘no-one’!!... make it individual, then they’ll work harder and be more grateful when it’s their ‘turn’
3. Give credit, stickers (or even some cheap sweets) for any answers/effort no matter how stupid
4. Write stuff down (whiteboard) that they say - it shows an interest in what they're saying
5. Talk to them like adults and ban the words ‘DUNNO’, ‘CAN’T’ and ‘NO IDEA’!
6. Be positive and talk about their aspirations - never dismiss them.
7. Tell stories about successful people and what they did when they were younger (small town stories who made it big etc... eg. Margaret Thatcher went to this school or Did you know?) - they need to dream.
8. Ask them “What did you learn today?” this is being very brave (someone is bound to say “NOTHING”- but dismiss that) and encourage those that are trying to be constructive.
9. Catch them doing things right - be specific & be sincere or otherwise say nothing at all
10. Demonstrate and show-off progress in the room, either for effort and/or attainment (but mainly effort)

Showing them Reality

1. Share personal stories or even difficult situations - they will always empathise with what you're saying... and ‘open up’ too
2. Let them take charge and take ownership of certain situations and the consequences of it not working out
3. Tell real stories that YOU like - just because you can. Students like random stuff !!
4. Tell them when you're not happy and why... and the behaviours you want to see instead
5. Bring things back to the ‘present’ and back ‘on-task’ when they get too far ahead of themselves
6. Don’t make empty threats - take action

BOTH sets of techniques show that you care ABOUT them...
The strategy of being positive and being tough is not a new one... but, it’s critical to know the behaviours that are associated with it... otherwise it’s just becomes irrelevant.

“The attitude and language of students has to change in someone’s class - it might as well be yours !!”

Students will be forever grateful when you help them see a positive and different way forward... they’ll make a big effort and your face will slowly become synonymous with ‘making progress’ and ‘being positive’...

... but, the attitude will only change if their beliefs change first !!

At ‘The Big Picture’ we get students to change their beliefs - it happens all of the time... we don’t do what teachers do, but the philosophy is exactly the same.

This is last week’s facebook comments...

Impossible? Nope... “I’m POSSIBLE” !!!!