



# Pushing Back on Pushy & Demanding Parents

Parent – Teacher Meetings:  
Going Beyond Communicating  
What Parents Want to Hear.

## THEMES

agreement, anxiety, assertiveness, attacking, authority, avoiding, being heard, catastrophisation, cognitive dissonance, etiquette, communication, competing needs, conflict, controlling, courage, deflection, disagreement, emotional reasoning, empathy, expectation setting, helping, helplessness, honesty, humility, labelling, learner outcomes, masking, partnership, perspective taking, professionalism, psychological safety, reframing, relationship building, retreating, shifting the burden, socialisation, stress, teacher self-efficacy, victimisation, well-being, withdrawing.



Failing to jump from teacher of students to leader of parents, teachers can often find themselves in unfamiliar and unwanted roles acting as unqualified counsellors, coaches, mentors and confidantes to emotionally needy parents.

Making the same mistake with pushy and demanding parents, teachers can fall into the trap of over-promising and taking ownership of issues over which they have no authority or ability to influence.

Over the last 2 decades our research reveals the strategic objective of most teachers when establishing relationships with parents and when interacting with them is to be liked; the primary objective in difficult parental situations is to get out of the conversation being liked, and the two most common tactics deployed are agreement and deflection. Rather than pulling parents into the important world of teaching, learning and progress, this cocktail emboldens parents to pull teachers into their domestic affairs, trials and tribulations.

Using meta-cognitive strategies and easily deployed tactics and approaches, every teacher can confidently and easily switch from teacher to leader and find the sweet spot where challenging and unreasonable parents become influenceable. Achieving this is the basis for progressing outcomes for many learners, and for many teachers, it's the basis for higher levels of joy and engagement, self-efficacy and well-being. If you're seeking professional learning for your staff or leaders focusing on well-being, teacher leadership and advancing outcomes for learners, this focus area might be part of the solution you're seeking.



## What are people saying about our programmes?

*"Tony, the way you challenged our thinking and made us think about how to be effective has been a revelation ... the ideas you present are so different from mainstream PD providers and whilst I know some people are uncomfortable with that, the thinking and ideas you share make so much sense and so much of a difference. Why aren't there more people like you giving the same messages and making the complex so much easier to confront. Thanks once again – participants are saying it's the most compelling PD they've ever had with many a-ha moments!"*  
Dy Stokes, DP, Paparua Street School, Executive Committee Christchurch Senior Leaders Network

### CONTACT DETAILS

Tony Burkin  
Accredited PLD Provider  
t.burkin@interlead.co.nz  
021 729 008  
www.interlead.co.nz

