

## **Teacher Talk Examples – Middle School**

### **Freedom Phrases**

Over the past few days I have discovered that Freedom Phrases are an excellent way to give students a feeling of power. I am currently a middle school teacher, and every morning my students approach me with many questions. In the past I would listen to their questions and reply with a simple yes or no. Now I reply with a Freedom Phrase, and my mornings are a lot less hectic.

Let me share with you some of the questions I was approached with every morning:

“May I go to the library and return my book?”

“May I go to breakfast?”

“May I use the bathroom?”

“May I go to the office and get my permission slip signed?”

“May I go next door to work on my project?”

When responding to such questions, I now say, “As long as you can be back in homeroom by 8:20, you decide.” I can still remember the look on one of my students’ faces when I responded this way for the first time. She looked at me in a very puzzled manner and then restated her question. I simply responded with the same Freedom Phrase, and eventually she got the idea and went about her business.

Now my students know that when I respond with a Freedom Phrase, they have my permission to go about their business, as long as they are cooperating within the limits stated in the phrase. Not only are my students experiencing a feeling of power, they are also becoming more responsible young adults.