



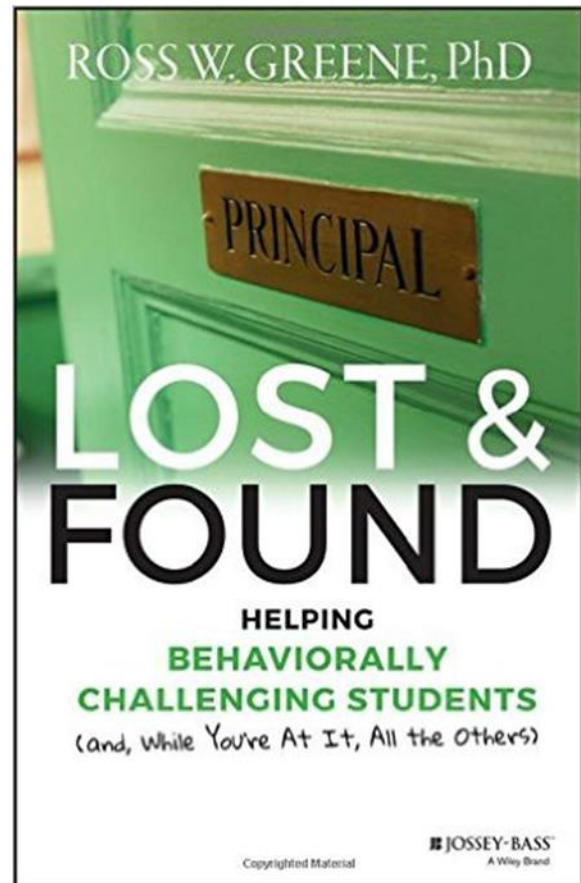
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As educators, we have all encountered students who struggle with challenging behaviors and ineffective self-management skills. Finding a behavior intervention model that really works would surely feel like the Holy Grail to educators nationwide. Child psychologist, Dr. Ross Greene's latest book, *Lost & Found: Helping Behaviorally Challenging Students (and all the others while you're at it)*, expands on his previous books, *The Explosive Child* and *Lost at School* to help find solutions to challenging student behaviors. Greene's series of books offer a research-based model that provides guidance and workable solutions for parents and educators that address challenging emotional and behavioral needs of children through the Collaborative & Proactive Solutions (CPS) model. In *Lost & Found*, the CPS model is aimed at assisting children in the school setting by providing educators with a collaborative model that offers solutions between teachers and students that can be designed and implemented in schools.



The crux of Green's CPS model is to help children with behavioral challenges in ways that offer support to build student skills rather than in ways that are punitive and adversarial. *Lost & Found* takes the CPS model one step further by providing added instruction to utilize Greene's skills assessment instrument, the Assessment of Lagging Skills & Unsolved Problems (ALSUP), for children who struggle with attaining successful behavioral skills. *Lost & Found* begins with "The Who" in chapter one, which explores the types of students the CPS model is specifically designed to help children who, due to their challenging behaviors, end up with additional struggles such as disciplinary referrals and other punitive consequences that don't necessarily resolve their behavioral challenges. Greene explores characteristics of these students so that educators can re-frame thinking which defines children with challenging behaviors as "attention seeking, manipulative, unmotivated, coercive and limit testing" (p.4) to a mindset based on the supposition that "kids do well if they can." Greene points to research indicating that children's maladaptive behaviors are the result of a developmental delay, or lagging skills, rather than the aforementioned motives. Although learning a new model of behavior re-direction can seem a daunting task initially, if successful, the returns of a reduction in challenging behaviors are well worth the time investment. Could it be possible that *Lost and Found* is the Holy Grail of behavior change? Let's take a deeper look at the CPS model presented and find out.

Once adults explore "The Who," in chapter one, Greene moves on to, "The Mess" and the long-term effects that impact children who lack sufficient problem solving skills. Greene cautions that when educators rely on diagnoses as the gatekeeper to services (such as the services offered through 504 Plans, IEPs, and FBAs) many students are left out of special helping services and are, instead, subjected to punishments that focus on behaviors rather than interventions that help

identify and resolve lagging skills and unsolved problems. This is a magnificent point that Greene makes. If school personnel provide services solely based on diagnoses, how can all students genuinely receive adequate educational services? I would be inclined to argue that a high percentage of students are not receiving adequate supports based on this very point. For example, it is widely reported in gifted literature that twice exceptional students are a population often held to expectations directly related to IQ measures and, subsequently, are held high standards in all areas of performance. There is little recognition that gifted students experience asynchronous development that may need intervention assistance for emotional and behavioral struggles or, as Greene puts it, lagging skills.

"The Shift," in chapter three, introduces the six key themes of the CPS model that help educators move from "the mess" to a collaborative problem solving model: kids do well if they can; doing well is preferable; the important stuff is upstream; the problem solving is collaborative, not unilateral; the problem solving is proactive, not reactive; and understanding is the most important part of helping. Greene's work supports the assertion that when adult helpers make the shift from assuming challenging behaviors result from a lack of motivation to the belief that challenging behaviors result from a lack of skills, the shift likewise moves the focus from student *behaviors* to a focus on student *skills*. This shift is fundamental to Greene's CPS model in that concentration is focused on solving problems collaboratively with students rather than imposing rules on students. In other words, proactive solutions rather than reactive solutions (or, as is often the case, reactive punishments). This chapter offers a solid foundation for understanding Greene's philosophy of children and behaviors. This may be the single most valuable chapter of the book. If a school building does nothing else with Greene's model, I recommend reading this chapter, at the very least, and discussing

the philosophy held among educators in the building as it relates to Green's model espoused in "The Shift."

Chapter four, "The ASLUP," offers guides, the Assessment of Lagging Skills and Unsolved Problems and the Problem Solving Plan, to help shift focus from maladaptive behaviors to student skills and, further, the problems impeding the acquisition of successful student behaviors. These instruments assist educators to determine the core of the student's conduct, which, according to Greene, are lagging skills and unsolved problems. Rather than focusing on theories that explain student behavior, the ASLUP serves as a discussion guide that focuses on identifying specific issues that can be resolved, the lagging skills and unsolved problems impacting student potential for success given the expectations of the environment. This chapter provides detailed direction for utilizing the ASLUP as a discussion guide that, in turn, leads the process of writing unsolved problem statements. As with any instrument, proper training is imperative to successfully utilize the instrument to identify and resolve problems. When it comes to training, although difficult, Ross Greene does not disappoint. He takes the reader through a detailed, step-by-step process demonstrating the guidelines of identifying and writing unsolved problems which aid in the productive utilization of the ASLUP. There are numerous key points and guidelines for effective application of the instrument such as: do not complete the ASLUP before the collaborative meeting; unsolved problems do not focus on adult theories of the student's behavior; and while identifying unsolved problems focus is void of challenging behaviors so that focus can be directed at the unmet expectation the student is struggling with. Chapter four maintains focus on unsolved problems and lagging skills so that an effective collaborative process of problem identification may subsequently transpire. This chapter presents no easy task for the reader. If this book is one's first

exposure to Green's CPS model, it may be difficult to fully follow and grasp utilization of the ASLUP. On a difficulty scale, I would rate this aspect of the ASLUP model as moderately to very difficult. Greene emphasizes the need to fully understand the model to accurately follow the guidelines set forth. To help with this complexity there are, in fact, live trainings and workshops offered through Ross Greene's foundation, [LivesInBalance.org](http://LivesInBalance.org).

Once the reader understands application of the ASLUP to identify unsolved problems, chapter five, "The Plans," progresses to the next step, determining how to solve the unsolved problems. The focus of The Plan is centered on the expectation the student is having difficulty meeting. This chapter offers three solutions, Plan A, imposing a solution; Plan B, solving problems collaboratively; and Plan C, temporarily setting aside a given unsolved problem. Greene shows how each Plan impacts the process of problem solving. This chapter will challenge many educators to look at how they have traditionally been taught to address challenging student behaviors and, in turn, will offer new strategies. As stated earlier, if you find that you have questions remaining it may be best to read some of Greene's earlier books or to use his website as a resource to enhance understanding of how to utilize his model.

Chapter 6, "The How To," is the moment the reader has been waiting for, the action stage of solving unsolved problems and addressing lagging skills. There are three essential steps outlined in the "The How To:" the Empathy step, the Define Adult Concerns Step, and the Invitation Step. The focal point of the Empathy step is developing an understanding of the student's perspective on a specific expectation that is unmet. The Empathy step not only aids the helper in understanding the student perspective, but also communicates genuine interest in the student's point of view. Therefore, there is no teaching or judgement taking place in the Empathy step; rather, there is exploration of the student perspective which, in turn, helps to

establish trust and a working partnership which supports a collaborative problem solving process. The counterpart to the Empathy step is the Define Adult Concerns Step. This step asks the adult to carefully consider 1) “how the unsolved problem is affecting the student” and 2) “how the unsolved problem is affecting others” (p. 98). Finally, “The How To,” progresses to the Invitation step. This step involves inviting the student to work together to find solutions to the concerns previously identified by both parties. The key to this step is that the student is presented with a process that is collaborative (finding solutions together) rather than unilateral (imposing adult solutions on the student). It is important to follow these steps in the prescribed order so that the student feels heard and validated before the adult begins to impose his or her “solutions” on the student. Greene points out that before solutions can be discussed, concerns from respective parties must first be identified in order to prevent the power struggle of competing solutions (those of the adult versus those of the student). These are collaborative steps that school counselors and other specialists in education should be well adept in. This step in the process is much easier than getting the ASLUP figured out.

Once the process of “The How To” is understood, Chapter 7 explores “The Pitfalls” and common problems that may befall the process of effectively identifying unsolved problems and finding successful solutions. This chapter aides in troubleshooting problems that impact the success of Green’s CPS model and the use of the ASLUP in developing fruitful student outcomes. Some of the pitfalls Greene explores include: reverting to Plan A; trying to utilize the model emergently, rather than under more manageable conditions; rushing through stages of the model that may result in an incomplete understanding of the student’s perspective (hence a null collaborative process); difficulty deciding which concerns to begin focusing on; lack of student participation; adult

assumptions that result in invalidating the student’s expressed perspective; and incorrect use of the model’s steps. Greene not only discusses numerous pitfalls, but he also goes on to troubleshoot and offer numerous solutions to the pitfalls that may besiege the problem-solving process. This chapter is telling of the common problems encountered while learning how to effectively utilize the CPS model and may be helpful in quelling any lingering doubts and concerns the reader may have.

The reality of any model is that stakeholders need to be on board as a whole in order for a model to be considered successful. Chapter 8 of *Lost & Found*: takes the reader to “The Logistics” of implementing the CPS model and successfully utilizing the ASLUP. “The Logistics” addresses “organizing and sustaining” the effort to attain proficiency and glean the benefits of the CPS model. Not to be overlooked is the importance for consistent messages to be disseminated to challenging students in the school building. Imagine if one teacher is fostering the Empathy step outlined in chapter six and another teacher is simultaneously skipping that step. Or, what if one teacher is working through the Plan B option while another is steadfast that Plan A is preferred, hence resulting in a lack of congruent messages being sent to the student? Chapter 8 reminds educational practitioners that this model is most effective when there is not only buy-in, but it is initiated with a core group who will become proficient in understanding and implementing the model. I appreciate that Greene points out the value in focusing on the nuts and bolts of the model while avoiding the trap of getting caught up in personal philosophies about behaviorally challenging kids. Oftentimes groups can get derailed and progress becomes stymied when too much focus is placed on individual opinions instead of cultivating a comprehensive understanding of the model.

*Lost and Found* concludes with a reminder that all students, not just the behaviorally challenging ones, may have times

when they too have difficulty meeting the expectations set forth. The CPS model is designed to help all students foster effective interpersonal relationship and problem-solving skills. When students are taught that their concerns and perspectives are not only valid but also *valuable* in the problem-solving process, they learn that solutions really are possible for them. The beauty of the CPS model is that it is more than just a model to help teachers work with redirecting difficult behaviors; it is a model that teaches students skills that they can transfer into all realms of communicating and interacting with others.

It is unlikely for this book to be effective if one approaches it as a manual to flip through to find worksheets and simple strategies to apply to difficult situations. Rather, this book needs to be read thoroughly and thoughtfully to grasp the concept and tools of Greene's CSP model and to capitalize on the possibilities of successful identification of student lagging behaviors and finding effective solutions for unsolved problems. If the CPS model is unfamiliar, and if you are still unsure of how to implement the CPS model, I recommend beginning with Ross Greene's earlier books to establish a foundation and better understand the theories and application of the models he presents.

If you are an educator (teacher, school counselor, principal, inclusion specialist, etc.) I highly recommend reading not only this book in its entirety, but also Ross Greene's two previous books that discuss the CPS model, *The Explosive Child* and *Lost at School*. Dr. Greene's model of working with behaviorally challenging students presents a thoughtful, collaborative, research-based model of understanding and helping children who need direction and compassion to resolve lagging skills and unsuccessful behaviors. At the core of Greene's model is the adage that, "Students do well if they can." His model allows us to keep this adage at the forefront so we don't fall into age-old thinking that challenging students are lazy, disrespectful, have bad attitudes, or are intentionally failing in their environments. Rather, Greene maintains focus that students with challenging behaviors need help to grow and develop better relationships, better communication, and the ability to successfully solve unsolved problems. I am not sure if Greene's work is the Holy Grail to resolving all challenging behaviors of students, but it is certainly a sound, research-based model that, I believe, is worth the time investment to implement in the school setting.

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### About the Reviewer

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