



The Inspiration of a Teacher

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Sit back, close your eyes, and bring to mind the three best teachers you ever had. Try to remember what they were like-how they looked, talked and acted, how they made you feel as their student.

Good teaching isn't about technique. It may be a connective capacity, how to connect to students, students to each other, and everyone to the subject being studied.

Good teachers:

- have a sense of purpose;
- have expectations of success for all students;
- tolerate ambiguity;
- demonstrate a willingness to adapt and change to meet student needs;
- are comfortable with not knowing;
- reflect on their work;
- learn from a variety of models;
- enjoy their work and their students.

A sense of purpose in sequencing and language can cultivate success for all students, and we can trust that thoughtful preparation makes good outcomes more likely. Good teachers think about and reflect on their classes, students, methods and materials. They compare and contrast, draw parallels and distinctions, review, remove and restore. Failing to notice what happens in class disconnects us from teaching and learning, because it's impossible to create connectivity if you've disconnected yourself.

In *Letters to a Young Poet*, Rainer Maria Rilke suggests that his correspondent, "try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language.... Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer".

In the same way, our teaching benefits if we can live for a little while with a question, think and observe, and let an answer develop in response to the situation.

Think back to your best teachers. How has your own teaching been shaped by practice, consciously or unconsciously? Think of the worst teacher you ever had. Are there things you absolutely will not do because you remember how devastating they were to you or others? We learn gradually, and absorb ideas and practices from a variety of sources. We are not always aware of the influences on our teaching, good and bad; reflecting on different models of teaching we've acquired, and looking at how we acquired them, makes us better able to adapt and change to suit new challenges.

Teachers who enjoy their work and their students are motivated, energized, and creative. The opposite of enjoyment is burnout-the state where no one and nothing can spark any interest. Notice that enjoying your work and enjoying your students may be two different things. Focusing too much on content may make students feel extraneous, misunderstood, or left out. Focusing exclusively on students, without an eye to content, may make students feel understood and appreciated, but may not help them. A balance between the two extremes takes time and attention; it demands close observation and discrimination.

The best teachers teach from the heart, not from the book.
~ Unknown



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Some say that my teaching is nonsense.
Others call it lofty but impractical.
But to those who have looked inside themselves,
this nonsense makes perfect sense.
And to those who put it into practice,
this loftiness has roots that go deep.

I have just three things to teach:
simplicity, patience, compassion.
Simple in actions and thoughts,
you return to the source of being.
Patient with both friends and enemies,
you accord with the way things are.
Compassionate toward yourself,
You reconcile all being in the world.

~ Lao Tzu

Confucius says...

Acquire new knowledge whilst thinking over the old, and you may become a teacher of others.

Learn as though you would never be able to master it;
Hold it as though you would be in fear of losing it

I want you to be everything that's you, deep at the center of your being.

To know, is to know that you know nothing. That is the meaning of true knowledge.

Every truth has four corners: as a teacher I give you one corner, and it is for you to find the other three.

And more from some other sage ones:

The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.

~ Dr Suess

The dream begins with a teacher who believes in you, who tugs and pushes and leads you to the next plateau, sometimes poking you with a sharp stick called "truth."

~ Dan Rather

A good teacher is like a candle - it consumes itself to light the way for others.

~ Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, translated from Turkish



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The true teacher defends his pupils against his own personal influence. He inspires self-distrust. He guides their eyes from himself to the spirit that quickens him. He will have no disciple.

~ *Amos Bronson Alcott*

If a doctor, lawyer, or dentist had 40 people in his office at one time, all of whom had different needs, and some of whom didn't want to be there and were causing trouble, and the doctor, lawyer, or dentist, without assistance, had to treat them all with professional excellence for nine months, then he might have some conception of the classroom teacher's job.

~ *Donald D. Quinn*

Good teachers are costly, but bad teachers cost more. ~ *Bob Talbert*

The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires. ~ *William Arthur Ward*

The best teacher is the one who suggests rather than dogmatizes, and inspires his listener with the wish to teach himself. ~ *Edward Bulwer-Lytton*

A teacher's purpose is not to create students in his own image, but to develop students who can create their own image. ~ *Unknown*

What the teacher is, is more important than what he teaches. ~ *Karl Menninger*

Teaching should be full of ideas instead of stuffed with facts. ~ *Unknown*

Teaching is leaving a vestige of one self in the development of another. And surely the student is a bank where you can deposit your most precious treasures. ~ *Eugene P. Bertin*

Teachers who inspire know that teaching is like cultivating a garden, and those who would have nothing to do with thorns must never attempt to gather flowers. ~ *Unknown*

When you teach your son, you teach your son's son. ~ *The Talmud*

One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child. ~ *Carl Jung*

The teacher who is indeed wise does not bid you to enter the house of his wisdom but rather leads you to the threshold of your mind. ~ *Kahlil Gibran*

Teachers touch the future. ~ *Unknown*



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A teacher who can arouse a feeling for one single good action, for one single good poem, accomplishes more than he who fills our memory with rows and rows of natural objects, classified with name and form. ~ *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them become what they are capable of becoming. ~ *Goethe*

They may forget what you said but they will never forget how you made them feel.
~ *Carol Buchner*

Watch your thoughts, they become words. Watch your words, they become your actions. Watch your actions, they become habits. Watch your habits, they become character. Watch your character, it becomes your destiny. ~ *Frank Outlaw*

If a seed of a lettuce will not grow, we do not blame the lettuce. Instead, the fault lies with us for not having nourished the seed properly. ~ *Buddhist proverb*

It is not what is poured into a student that counts but what is planted. ~ *Linda Conway*

Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire. ~ *William Butler Yeats*

Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn. ~ *Benjamin Franklin*

It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.
~ *Albert Einstein*

Good teaching is more a giving of right questions than a giving of right answers. ~ *Josef Albers*

If you have knowledge, let others light their candles at it. ~ *Margaret Fuller*

And to end with another Chinese Sifu, Bruce Lee:

I am not teaching you anything. I just help you to explore yourself

Life itself is your teacher, and you are in a state of constant learning.

A good teacher can never be fixed in a routine... each moment requires a sensitive mind that is constantly changing and constantly adapting. A teacher must never impose this student to fit his favourite pattern; a good teacher functions as a pointer, exposing his student's vulnerability (and causing him to explore both internally and finally integrating himself with his being. Martial art should not be passed out indiscriminately.

A good teacher protects his pupils from his own influence

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- 2 Teach is
- 2 Touch lives
- 4 Ever