

MY IDEA OF A GOOD SCHOOL AND A GOOD TEACHER

Description

I never imagined I would be a teacher. My only desire was to see me as a photographer. I never knew why? But what excited me was observing people, wandering across fields and savoring nature in all its rich colors. Unknowingly, I have developed a keen eye for nature's hidden panoramas. I somehow relished these less strain on my mind specialties.

I was never a man to sit and read or prepare for examinations type. It never occurred to me I had to stick to one specific career. Or a definitive plan to settle in future was never on my daily thinking agenda. Stayed away from my home, living in hostels had encouraged my carefree attitude. Obstinate, it somehow got settled deep in my mental niche.

All this easy-going regime of mine had come to an unforeseen end. It's because of my father's illness. This happened during the year 1985-86. By then I have been married and celebrated two birthdays of my daughter Neelima. And my wife Mani was pursuing her post-graduation courses. My father's demise in 1990 was too sudden and premature. He was fifty-six then.

I was twenty-nine then and skeptically presumed myself not so grown-up enough. And not a worthy academic hire to his huge good-will and scholastic repute. To carry out the responsibilities of my father's academic interests or the control of the school he had established

He is too inexperienced and doesn't have the personality or the academic equivalent to govern a school. I heard the grumbles that made rounds among the more than hundred strong teachers' group. Adding to them was also from a few thousands of parents, who patronized our school. At that point in my age, fancying the cheery and happy lifestyle I too felt it was not untrue. But I knew then the potential reality. I'm the eldest in the family. Hence, the fact left me with no other choice. I positively framed myself and prepared for most challenging assignment. How I took my first plunge into the unknown territory of supervising the school was not that clear to me till today.

Perhaps, it was my innocent fascination or I have been carrying the seed of my father's passion for teaching. I learned quickly the nuances of workings of the school. Foremost, I had realized one fact about the school, 'If I have to manage the school I have to be a good teacher first. I have to be good in English communication faculties'.

From there on for next twenty-five years I have created my personal educational ecosystem. Comments like, 'you are too young, you can never measure up to your father's standing' frightened me often. But I plunged with excitement and idealism which I knew I'm full of such emotions.

From then on my days had become hectic; I got caught in the swirl working hard to learn the methods of teaching. Unknowingly, I saw in myself an ambition to build an educators image. Not wholly but at least half reaching what my father had held. The uppermost were the three traditions that my father had pursued religiously in building up the school. There are about the teaching, the discipline and the well-fare of children and teachers.

I saw my father as my role model and his philosophy as my guiding compass. I took to his passion for reading, his quest for teaching and also started off to dress like him.

I figured out that my foremost priority was winning over the teachers and having them to trust my leadership. The second tough calling was to fine-tune my approach towards the parents' demands. Initially, though it had been a tough proposition to go for. But I had managed to invite their support more readily than I had expected.

In one year's time, I was able to see the unfolding of bold confidence in me. I gently was able to come to grips with several educative essentials. Well within two years' time I placed my school back on a progressive track. It's now three years that I'm into this apprenticeship. Mostly during the period, I had recognized one well-meaning insight emphasizing my hopeful forward journey. It went like this. It's me who has to adjust to the claims of the teachers. The growing list of demands of the parents' groups, the innocent and silent aspirations of the children.

I was then young, charged with a strong appetite to create a mark of my own. I'm quite willing to accommodate all the requirements: what it takes to supervise a good school.

Somewhere during the times when I entered my fourth year manning it. A few aspects of schooling, I had felt something was not correct. That education is not mere classrooms or books or teaching or learning. As it was an accepted norm and believed by many. I broadly got convinced that this is true concerning most of the children and the teachers too. Some revelation has inspired me to think. That the whole practice of teaching and learning requires something else, something more subjective in reality.

Many emotional requirements are deeply entwined with teaching and learning. It must never be seen as merely a blunt physical act. If we go closer to identify, it is one spirited multi-intellectual and free-floating sentiment that everybody asks for. When I sat in the classrooms this was what I concluded that was missing in my school. Everyone wants to be needed and recognized and understood. A unanimous emotional greed mostly cried out for by the children and craved by teachers.

As majority inclusively see it, the need couldn't be filled in by books and exams. Many of us routinely argued about it. That was mostly, the customary way it should be. Instead, I wanted to give a different spin in my school. I had come up with altogether a new outlook which could be introduced in my school. For me, an ideal school and a passionate teacher must have to go beyond this book and exam type routes. I want to see them the teaching not as a mere responsibility, but as a sublime calling.

Does anyone care for me today? this was how a child sat in a classroom, the note playing on their innocent pleasant minds constantly. He meekly waited every day without a pause, Does anyone recognizes me with all my perks and defects?. This throbbed in him, hopefully, so long as he found himself within the four walls of a classroom.

Whenever I entered my school premises, I could read on the face of every child reflected in their anxious eyes as if searching for an answer. For their deeply buried hesitation. Will I be cared all right today? Nothing more or nothing less.

Teachers too are not exempted from this psychological longing. Their distress straight hit me the moment I entered their classroom. I quickly became perceptive to this subtle provision. I decided that I

had to own up this fact and quickly take the corrective steps. Later, I thought about it long and hard. I had questioned myself, "How am I supposed to address this yearning of the children and the teachers? Only if this psychological criterion was met then I assumed that a child or a teacher would find themselves in learnable ambiance. With those insights, to go up to the next essential area to teach well by a teacher and received by the child.

I concluded that there was only one solution for this change to appear in my school. I have to learn first. Figure out as much I could about the mental dynamics that transpired in the classroom between the teacher and children.

To do so, I had set aside my time. And I pored over volumes about teaching techniques, followed by many and engaged myself in being sensible of finer practices of child psychology.

For a year I had committed myself to gather as much guiding material as I could. Finally, I felt confident that I can guide and coach and assist my group of teachers. The blueprint I had prepared to help them was to evolve as effective teachers and with good doses of empathy attached to it. My Idea was essentially to introduce and create a gentle humane ambiance in my school.

My guidance and prescription are that every child must sit in the classroom with no fear. And he was relaxed to learn at his own pace and terms. Further, I emphasized again and again that every teacher must stand tall and gentle before the children. Both of them trusting each other with one calm feeling, "This is the place I feel I'm needed, my identity, my self-respect is cared for." I transformed my role into a cheerleader, "I promise my words and deeds would match the attachment my students have fostered towards me and enormous trust teachers have invested in me."

Gradually, it became clear to me that my school had turned out for me as a big laboratory. It's all about of human relationships, of mutual respect and of self-identity. Classrooms, play areas are the niches where these resilient elements are practiced every day. For this to take effect I recognized my role as a teachers' guide. Eventually, I portrayed myself as a guiding force.

Counseled the three emotionally sensitive human elements of the school - the child, the teacher and the parent

In my school, all these "masterings of good teaching practices" did not show up overnight. Guiding, practicing, encouraging, coaching has become my surviving tool in my journey. Over the years I could see a perceptible change in the attitude of parents towards me. Quite seamlessly the teachers too showed their willingness to accept my path to a happy learning. Meaning that learning happens more on playgrounds than in classrooms as a functional credo. Finally, to model my school as a happy place for all of us.

The result, it was not only me who was working harder every day. The children and the teachers too have come to invest all their creative energies. And they started enjoying it.

I was really overjoyed when children demonstrated their enthusiasm in all their academic disciplines. It didn't stop there; I noticed their devotion and energy amplified and flowed into imaginative pursuits. Games and hobbies planted healthy attitudes in the children. Teachers vied to push their own batches of children to participate in multi-layered academic and extra-academic pursuits. Guiding them to assimilate one truth, "It's participation and learning that are more important. Winning and losing

has the same sweetness. Winning you enjoy it immediately but losing allows tasting it slowly but surely.â?•

Having arrived at this point, after many years, I can say with satisfaction. It was because of an unquestionable feat of my trusted team of teachers. It was they who had contributed with their perfect appreciation of nuances of childrenâ??s demands and desires. Be it be in the classrooms or on the playfields it was their affinity to the children that achieved better results and produced many happy young hearts. They were never once tempted to spend too much emphasis on rather the formal â??teach, read and examsâ?? structure.

I had been twenty-five years into teaching. It was twenty-five years ago I first stepped into my school with an apprehensive restrain like, â??How would teachers and parents assess meâ?•. It was twenty-five years ago I had sweated and stammered my first seminar to my teachers. Today I sit back, one step away from my active teaching life. I felt troubled at one thought which keeps away my calmness.

A trace of regret at times haunts me. For I still have with me an unfulfilled agenda and dreams about my plans for childâ??s education. Deep inside I hopefully hold a pressing urge to convey to all teachers and parents. I want to share something about my idea of a helpful teacher and an enterprising school. Who can fire the childâ??s imagination with new inventiveness and hand him a key to unlock the versatile talents which he doesnâ??t know existed?

A child is a bud with a built-in wealth of intelligence, resources, expertise, qualities. The essential secret of good teaching is nurturing and energizing these facilities. Help the children themselves to capture them. Thus they can bloom bright and lively. And being introduced to grasp one fact clear and deep, â??learning and living are lifetime disciplinesâ?•. And they are irreversible and inseparable.

Let our teaching community, parenting groups set the pace for this acceleration. Hopefully, for our children, the schools are always safe places for study. And encourage schools to make every effort to develop into springboards of healthy interests for our children. Itâ??s up to us to see that they followed their inquisitiveness to enter into the larger competitive world. A transition only good schools and good-hearted teachers can truly make for our children a reality.

Category

1. Uncategorized

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