

“Why I Teach”

by Tiffany Carter
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I teach because I want to change lives and show children stability and love. My thoughts are that when students feel compassion and understanding from their teacher, the learning comes naturally. It took me sometime to set this as the purpose for my career. Initially, I chose teaching because it just seemed a good fit but once I encountered my students, that all changed. Some students have a scattered home life; they go through such horrible things at a young age. They need someone in their life to treat them with care and compassion. I educate and treat my students in the same way that I would want my own nieces and nephew to be taught and treated. I do not have children of my own and so they serve as my educational compass. Each of my nieces and nephew have unique personalities, dreams, faults and learning styles, which is how I view all of my students as unique. Treating a student as I would want them to be treated is multifaceted. I attempt to make an immediate connection with my students that way I can assess their needs, including educational and emotional. I also allow my students to personally know me which establishes a level of comfort that makes the atmosphere between us more conducive for learning.

When I meet a student I ask him/her a few questions that almost always tell me exactly what I want to know, thereby allowing me to understand the best way to reach that student. I think it is key for an educator to get to know each student on a personal basis. Children today face as many struggles in life as adults. They are often shuffled from home to home and sometimes find themselves living with strangers. Teachers have to know what is going on in the lives of their students in order to be effective. Also, it assures the students that the teacher cares and has an interest in them and in their life. I also allow my students to know me on a personal basis. I often share my own stories of laughs and tears with them so that they understand that I am experiencing the same joys and worries that they are. This connection allows me to have a unique relationship of comfort with my students. Once they are comfortable with

me and understand that I am a safe haven that they can trust, they receive the instruction from me with ease.

I feel that students should feel comfortable in their school environment to share and contribute as ideas and questions come to them so they feel that they are an integral part of their own education. Many middle school age students dislike school and I make every effort to change that. I remember that every student is someone’s child. I appreciate those teachers that understand that my own nieces and nephews have unique personalities and then make an effort to customize learning to meet their needs, educational and emotional. I develop the kind relationship with my students that I hope that other teachers develop with my nieces and nephew and that makes all the difference.

My advice to future educators is to remember to let your heart lead you, not the curriculum. Being a person you students can trust and count on should come before instruction. In my experience once you have put that first, the rest falls into place on its own.



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