

To Teach is to Touch Lives Forever

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Have you heard of elusive jobs where people jump out of bed, ready to start their workday? As a teacher, I am privileged to hold one of those jobs. Teaching is a vocation; it is not simply a paycheck. There is no way I could face a classroom full of eager students, each bringing their own unique personality and problems, without knowing a teacher is more than a bay-sitter for eight hours. I firmly believe teachers shape our world.

There are success stories but we do not always see the results of countless hours pouring into the lives of our students. One of my students comes from a broken home and has some learning disabilities. I tried to open the day with affirming one good thing he had done, even if it was just writing his name. All year it was like pulling teeth with every capital letter, spelling list, and math problem, but at the end of the year I received a card that said, “thank you miss Dinkens for being the Best teacher ever.” Now the year is done and I may never know what becomes of his spelling but I will continue to pray for his growth.

Every day my students carry an unseen backpack into the classroom. This pack holds their hopes, fears, joys, burdens from their families and friends, attitude towards others and their own selves. Some carry more baggage than others, and my goal is to create a safe environment where they can leave their burdens outside. If they are secure in themselves then they have the potential to change the world! A teacher’s influence reaches far beyond their classroom walls.

Some of the greatest men and women in history were teachers. Helen Keller was unlocked from her cage of blindness and deafness by a compassionate and patient teacher, Anne Sullivan. Miss Sullivan’s pupil went on to inspire countless millions around the world with her story. Socrates became a renowned teacher of antiquity through the eyes of his most famous student Plato. His contribution to ethics and the Socratic method has shaped pedagogy for centuries. Jesus Christ’s disciples were willing to die for the truths he taught. Those humble, uneducated fishermen spread their Teacher’s words across the world and influenced world-changers such as Ghandi and Martin Luther King Jr. Belonging to a vocation with such members is an honor. Though I may never leave the simple position of an elementary teacher, I jump out of bed every day ready to meet the needs of my students. Who knows? One day I may join the ranks of those special souls who have touched a life forever.