

## The Inner Calling to Teach

When you determine that you want to be a teacher of children or teenagers, that is much more than a career decision. It is a commitment to the future generation and an expression of a nobility in you that would not be seen in any other way. Unlike many other lines of work, people go into teaching for other reasons than just an interest in the career field or a way to make a paycheck.

Its sometimes difficult to put into words what your motivations are that drive you to pick teaching as your career. This is especially true if you are asked by friends why you made that choice. In many ways teaching is misunderstood and if you voiced what that inner calling to teach feels like, that urge to educate the young takes on the trappings of the calling of a missionary or a martyr. So you probably don't voice your real motivations because they might sound corny to someone who is not carrying that special calling as you are.

Part of that urge to teach the young is a bond between you and the next coming up generation that makes you driven to offer your talents, your education and your life to teach the young important information and to model life skills for them as well. That bond with the very young may have originated in you when you had children yourself. But for a teacher who is called to the profession at a very deep level, that calling does not go away which is why so many teachers stay with the job decade after decade only willing to lay it down when health issues brought on by age forces the issues.

But the teaching calling is not entirely altruistic. There are some real rewards that also exist on the emotional and ethical level to being a teacher. Just seeing young people respond to knowledge and to your leadership as their teacher is deeply gratifying to one who is called to this profession. And when you are teaching a classroom of 20-30 kids, that gratification can become magnified many times over. It is a great experience of excitement when you see so many children do well and move on to their next grade all because of what you offered to them as their teacher.

Teaching young people is also a tremendous amount of fun. Yes, as their teacher it is your task to keep them on task to complete their lessons and keep moving toward their goal of finishing their educational objectives of the day and of the year. But along the way you become a friend of the child and the child a friend of yours. There are literally scores of moments of the sheer joy of play between teacher and student that is grounded in a pure form of friendship that is a hidden benefit to committing to a classroom of children to teach and mentor them to success.

The calling to teach is one that is buried deep in the soul of the teacher and

for many, it goes unfulfilled. The difficulties of teaching or the rigorous training that society requires of teachers often keeps away many talented teachers who cannot make those kind of sacrifices. But for those that can, the sense of fulfillment of a mission and the pride and satisfaction of seeing your students do well is a reward for teaching that is impossible to describe and impossible to replace as well.

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