

## Teach with all your heart

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THIRTY years ago I decided to be a teacher because I liked teaching. Watching my mother teach in informal settings also gave me the inspiration to be a teacher. There have been many opportunities for me to take up other professions, but my heart was, is and will forever be in teaching.

When I went to do my medical test to enter a teacher training college, the doctor asked: "Why become a teacher? It is lowly paid. Why not become a doctor like me?" I clearly remembered answering: "If all your teachers thought like you, you would not have become a successful doctor as you are today." The doctor nodded shyly and changed the topic. On the humorous side, I can say I have become a "doctor" for the holistic development of humankind; yet I am a teacher, an educator who educates from the heart.

Being a teacher is not a call for remuneration, but a call to service so that human beings can better themselves. A teacher needs to be alert, at all times, to the environment and how the world is transforming. Many a time, I have seen teachers get emotional in class and give students "a piece of their mind". They nag about how terrible their students are and what they are going to face if they do not study, finish their homework and get good grades.

Do you think the students are listening? Maybe a small percentage will, but the majority are so used to this kind of drama in school, and at home, that they "switch off" and start on their own mental adventure. So, giving students "a piece of the teacher's mind" is a drain of energy for the teacher and a waste of precious curriculum/teaching and learning time.

If a teacher is upset with students, it is always effective to silence the class and express how he feels about students who do not have an interest in the lessons. For example, I enjoy showing video clips to my students in Moral Education class as it is a quick way to provide a scenario to help students understand the topic of the day. It is quite tedious and takes hours to select a 10-minute clip.

When one or two students do not pay attention, I will tell them to see me after class but I do not stop or reprimand the whole class as it is not fair to do that to all of them. I have had students who shed tears by the end of my five-minute pep talk. Well, the students might not transform into angels during the next lesson but they did receive a piece of my heart. The point I am making here is that when you reach out to students with your heart, through the use of loving and caring words, even the toughest of student will melt and start reflecting. That is why it is important for teachers to share empowerment in the classroom and give every student a piece of their heart. The more teachers give, the more they receive, and in many ways. At the end of the day, it's our heartfelt lessons and experiences that our students bring home and remember.

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