Clearly Outstanding
Making Each Day Count in Your Classroom

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If you are a teacher in our elementary and secondary schools, you know that your job is one of the most difficult and complex that exists today. It is sometimes more technical than the work of an aerospace engineer, more immediate than that of a trauma physician, and more frustrating than a bus driver's rush-hour shift. Teaching today requires emotions and skills at peak perfection. Among the emotions and skills needed by today's teachers is one factor that must be present to make all the others work. That factor is your ability to grow—to use learned competencies in new and unfamiliar ways and to change in response to the conditions around you.

As the experienced teacher knows, the gulf between the university classroom in which teachers are prepared to teach and the reality of a first teaching assignment can be wide and perilous. Some survive the journey, and some don't. Those who do survive to become committed and effective teachers learn in those very first years of teaching how to grow—to change and adapt to conditions they could not foresee and for which no amount of training could prepare them. During those first years in the classroom they learn how to survive new and often difficult circumstances and to adapt themselves to their environment, as well as to adapt their environment to who they are. In other words, their mental or psychological perspective is as important as their formal training in the content and methods of teaching.

How to grow professionally and personally in the context of your classroom is the focus of this book. There is no profession I am aware of that provides the conditions for growth—both professional and personal—as well as teaching does. Growth can only come from challenge, unrest, disharmony, and change. Classrooms have more than their share of these factors, which place the teacher in the position of do or die—learn how to manage and change the environment around you or be swallowed up by it. This book aims to provide direction—a mental framework or psychological perspective—whereby you can harmoniously participate in the challenge, opportunity, and change occurring all around you.

To this end, the book has four simple prescriptions. Simply stated, whether or not you become effective will depend on:
As you journey through this book, we will touch on each of these steps and provide examples of how you can attain the mental framework for teaching that each step requires. Our journey will be through what will be unfamiliar terrain for most readers. We do not cover methods or techniques, say much about lesson plans and objectives, or talk about testing, grading, or recordkeeping. This is a book about effective teaching that says little or nothing about those traditional topics, because, although all these are necessary, they rarely make the difference between effective and ineffective teaching, in my opinion. Effective teaching requires much more. That is the reason for this book: to provide a perspective or component of teaching that is not often provided for in the preparation to teach and that requires familiarity with a real classroom to truly appreciate.

Therefore, although this book will be of interest to preservice teachers, especially those who are beginning to sample the real classroom through observation and practice teaching, it is also intended for the inservice teacher—primarily the beginning teacher. It is in those crucial years that teachers first come to realize that something has been missing from all the training they may have received. The need for it often becomes apparent only in those first years in the classroom. The missing component that so forcefully comes to us through experience is a mental framework for professional and personal growth that lets us constructively use the forces of change, challenge, and opportunity that may be operating all around us. It requires of you the development of feelings that can guide you through the thick and thin of teaching. It is the recognition of your feeling self—the affective, as opposed to cognitive, side of you that will become the basis for developing a mental framework for growth in which you can adapt and use to advantage the forces of change, challenge, and opportunity that every classroom presents.

Just as the theme of this book is unique, so is its organization. To accomplish our purpose, I have plotted a journey that will allow you to become closer to who you really are—to get to know a side of yourself that can be immensely useful in your teaching but that may not have been developed in your undergraduate training, or maybe even stifled by it. The mechanics of teaching are important, but in this book we will build upon and go beyond them, not trudge through them. Our mission will be different—to help you to grow professionally and personally so that you can be clearly outstanding in your classroom.

We begin in Chapter 1, The Magic Child, by describing a boy named Mark who exemplifies much of what you will be able to do at the end of
this book. Mark has a mental state-as do most children-capable of surpassing his own expectations, circumventing limitations, and turning challenge into opportunity. It is a mental state we increasingly lose in our adult world, so we must stop from time to time to regain it, perhaps with the aid of a book like this. Throughout this book, we return to Mark-his playfulness, quiet mind, focus of attention, feelings, and vulnerability-to point out the importance of some of those same characteristics in your teaching.

Chapter 2, Where We Are Today, traces some of the recent events that have made the classroom the challenge and opportunity for professional and personal growth that it is today. The chapter confronts the reader with the reality of today's classrooms and what some have said about them. Chapter 2 and its data on schools reflect the reality that many of today's classrooms are heterogeneous and culturally diverse-a fact for which every teacher, young and old, must be prepared. This is why the remainder of this book will be so important-it provides the mental or psychological perspective needed to become an active participant in change and to grow from it, professionally and personally. Today's classrooms provide the mix of change and opportunity from which professional and personal growth must come. The purpose of Chapter 2 is to be realistic about the change, so that you can turn it into opportunity.

In Chapter 3, Stages of Professional Growth, we pick up the threads of the previous chapter to begin a framework for teaching that can turn the reality of today's classrooms into opportunity for you and your students. This chapter describes how teachers cope with change and challenges in their classroom-and why some survive them and some don't. In this chapter we discuss and illustrate how cycles of value change have altered classrooms from the homogeneity of 50 years ago to the heterogeneity and cultural diversity of today. This chapter shows how cultural diversity and its rapid cycles of value change will influence preparation for teaching in the decade ahead. More important, this chapter shows how some teachers have tried to cope with cultural diversity, both successfully and unsuccessfully.

Chapter 4, Three Teacher Portraits, is the first of four chapters of vignettes interspersed throughout the book to illustrate how the concepts discussed in previous chapters actually affect the lives of three practicing teachers. Through the words and feelings of Angela, a fifth-grade teacher; Kurt, an eighth-grade junior high teacher; and Sheila, a high school teacher, we see how the different stages of growth discussed in previous chapters play out in the lives of these teachers. These portraits are intended to bring ideas down to earth-with real people whose lives are being affected both professionally and personally by each of the concepts discussed. Most readers will be able to identify with one of the three portraits to provide a ready comparison to where they are in their own journey toward professional growth. Chapter 5, The Power of Purpose, is where our road to effective
teaching truly begins. Chapter 5 asks, "Why are you teaching?" Teachers teach for many reasons, and some teach for superficial or unrealistic reasons. The problem is that if you don't have a purpose for teaching that goes beyond just presenting subject matter, you probably will not remain a teacher for long or become a committed and effective teacher. In this chapter you are asked to decide if you see your teaching as just a job, as a secure job, as an important job, or as a purposeful job. A self-report instrument is provided to help you determine which perception is most typical of you at this stage of your career. Once your perception is determined, suggestions are given for acquiring a purpose for teaching that can serve you in your journey toward growth. Personally meaningful and stereotyped purposes are demonstrated, and work space is provided for you to enter your own statements of purpose that can guide you in the journey toward growth.

Chapter 6, Finding the Person Inside, discusses characteristics for achieving professional growth and breaking the bonds of our self-imposed limitations. These characteristics include playfulness, concentration, flow, and affect, which are the same characteristics that Mark used in facing challenge and opportunity in Chapter 1. The connection between a small boy's performance in surpassing his own expectations at play and a teacher's performance in surpassing his or her own expectations in the classroom is made through the interconnecting concepts of playfulness, concentration, flow, and affect. The special role of each in fostering professional and personal growth is made through the use of work examples, in which the reader is asked to design his or her own flow activities. Chapter 6 is a plan for professional growth that is both simple and practical; it presents the essence of what practical experience and volumes of academic work tell us about growth and how to attain it.

Chapter 7, Teacher Portraits: One Year Later, revisits Angela, Kurt, and Sheila. A year later each of our characters has had to grapple with the issues of professional and personal growth presented in the previous two chapters. We see them growing at different rates and reaching different stages by chapter's end. Reflections by the author place the personal narratives of the teachers in the perspective of past and future chapters. The reader can compare himself or herself with a summary chart of the growth of each of our three teachers, which indicates where each is in the journey toward professional growth.

Chapter 8, Effective Teachers, describes how good teachers move from a concern for self and survival in their initial years of teaching to a concern for the mechanics of the teaching task, and finally to a concern for their impact on students. A self-report instrument is provided, by which readers can determine the stage of concern-self, task, or student impact-with which they most identify at this stage of their career. Then the chapter traces six characteristics of teachers who have attained the highest level of professional
growth—an awareness of their impact on students. These teachers are shown to have a purpose for teaching that is greater than just presenting subject matter, be observers of their own actions, know what they value and focus their behavior on those values, "play" at teaching in unconventional ways, be long-term planners and thinkers, and place paramount importance on their relationships with others. This chapter addresses how you can attain these characteristics in your own classroom.

Chapter 9, Changing Classrooms, discusses techniques for teaching in today's heterogeneous and culturally diverse classrooms. In these settings, learners become more willful decision makers, looking out for their own needs and, if they find them unmet, looking elsewhere. In these classrooms the mere structure of a classroom and a teacher's lesson plan are not sufficient to invoke a commitment to learn, as they might be in a smaller, more homogeneous class of learners. This chapter describes four instructional events for teaching in heterogeneous and culturally diverse classrooms, to provide an alternative to the traditional lesson plan. The reader learns how to set the tone, establish a need, demonstrate capability, and obtain a commitment by the use of situation, problem, implication, and payoff questions, which can be used to promote each of the four events for teaching in heterogeneous and culturally diverse classrooms.

Chapter 10, Teacher Portraits: Three Years Later, visits Angela, Kurt, and Sheila once again. In the preceding years each has had to grapple with change—Angela with a change in her teaching assignment from fifth to first grade, Kurt with his ambivalence about becoming a school administrator, and Sheila with her desire to leave teaching for a more glamorous position in the world of publishing. These changes and the emotions they create cause them to reflect upon life as a teacher, why they chose to teach, and whether they should continue on their present course. In this chapter, we see them being encouraged to explore who they really are and what they want from their lives.

Teachers today need patience to live through the change, complexity, and ambiguity that surround them. Chapter 11, Leaders, Mentors, and Partners, describes some of the sources from which this patience can be drawn and the important role other teachers, mentors, and partners play in providing it. "Leadership" is one of those words in the English language that is often spoken but little understood. Just when we think we are beginning to understand it, we find more layers of verbiage and good intentions hiding any meaning it may have. This chapter takes the view that leadership resides within the individual, not in a position that requires it, and that every teacher can become a leader among his or her peers. This chapter shows how teachers can shift their focus from "me" to "we" and become leaders by having a purpose, believing in themselves, focusing on their impact on students, networking with others for a common purpose, leveraging their often meager
resources, empowering others to act, and innovating with small changes within their own classrooms.

In Chapter 12, Teacher Portraits: Five Years Later, we pay Angela, Kurt, and Sheila a final visit. It has been five years since our first visit, and each teacher has changed and grown in different ways. By this time, Angela has found a purpose for teaching that is all her own, giving her a new sense of direction and enthusiasm. Kurt is beginning to make the important connection between his own behavior and that of his students. Sheila has come to terms with her own burnout and frustrations after more than 14 years in the classroom. In this chapter we see how Angela, Kurt, and Sheila continue to grow and acquire the purpose and meaning they have long sought. We end our visits by reflecting on their journey toward professional growth and noting the milestones each has passed along the way.

In Chapter 13, the final chapter, I place the contents of the previous chapters in perspective through my own experience. It is a different type of chapter, which takes a bold step-into the hidden consciousness of our own minds. This is a world of values and feelings that lies hidden within us and is often locked up by our self-imposed limitations. This final chapter shows, through example and experience, that a powerful unconscious language within us may have been dormant for most of our adult lives, but can be used for guiding our actions in and out of the classroom. By stripping away self-imposed barriers to our consciousness, this chapter searches for the roots of instinct and common sense that lie within us all-those values and feelings that form the unspoken language of the heart. This chapter explores how, in your professional and personal life, you can acquire that language to direct your decision making in and out of the classroom and to make your professional and personal life clearly outstanding.
About the Author

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Unnoticed by most of us, there is a miracle that is repeated over and over again each day of the year. Some miracles occur in hospitals, churches, and in faraway places, but this one takes place much closer to home and to school. It occurs on almost any playground.

This is a strange sort of miracle: It is repeated so often in front of our eyes, but most of the time we fail to see it. Let's see if you agree that it is an event worth noting.

Mark is a first-grader who is dropped off by his mother the first day of the school year. While waiting for school to begin, he finds the playground—which is unlike the playthings to which he has become accustomed in his backyard and, occasionally, in outings with his family. He feels that this is now his school and that these are no ordinary playthings. He derives from them a special, adultlike feeling of ownership. Now the miracle begins, unknown to his teachers, peers, and loved ones—all of whom may be watching.

Mark seizes the moment to play. He begins to explore the visual and physical texture of this playground. He first tries the swings, cautiously swinging up and back a few times but then dragging his feet and stopping abruptly. He then turns to the merry-go-round, where several other children are hanging on for dear life, accelerating faster and faster and screaming louder and louder. After only a few moments, dizziness sets in, and he jumps to safety before (he reasons) it may be too late. Besides, he spies the monkey-bars out of the corner of his eye. With each new rung he gives out a barely audible groan, and in a moment he is at the very top, frightened but excited to have such a grand view of all that lies below. This is a feeling Mark has never had before. He is unable to analyze the message inherent in this little triumph, but it gives him a sense of satisfaction and a feeling of discovery that he has never experienced.

The school bell rings. Something about this morning is different from any other morning of Mark's life. Mark can't reveal what has changed and does not even know he has changed—he can only feel it. His teachers and
peers may have been watching, and his mother surely was, but they did not realize that something small but very special occurred to Mark in those few moments before school. It may have happened to others as well, and it will no doubt happen to Mark again—perhaps many times in the initial years of his life. For some years to come Mark will, in a sense, be reborn with each new and challenging experience. He will continue to be excited about life by exploring, adventuring, and experiencing the environment around him. His feeling about life will be so compelling that he will be excited to wake up, to be alive, and to start the discovery process over again, each time in some new and more challenging way.

This episode in Mark's life would not be remarkable, if it were not in stark contrast to how many adults begin each day. Few among us begin the day with a feeling of exploration and adventure; some of us begin each day in anticipation of failure or more of the same. Most adults do not approach the day with anything close to Mark’s yearning for exploration or adventure but instead with a self-imposed numbness.

Numbness is that capacity to feel nothing—to treat opportunities for excitement and failure as though they were the same, letting each bounce off us to avoid any possible side effects, either good or bad. Numbness protects us from having any newly acquired hope and excitement dashed to ruin or from experiencing failure again after having experienced it so many times before. With numbness we become invulnerable to almost any event or circumstance life throws at us; our feelings and emotions are protected. Some of us are better at injecting ourselves with numbness than others, but from the end of our innocent childhood years until we become senior citizens, we lose the playfulness of a child and with it the most powerful side of ourselves for being alive and whole.

Let's return to the playground to see what made Mark's experience so different from that of many adults, and why we would be fortunate to be able to take on the perspective of a child in our adult world.

There are some ingredients of Mark’s experience that could not be seen by the naked eye. So special are they that they constitute a miracle when contrasted with the limitations we sometimes place upon ourselves as adults.

First, Mark was playful, in the true meaning of the word. But what does being full of play mean? Not frivolous, silly, or undisciplined, as some would say. There was little about Mark's playground behavior that could be categorized accurately with these words, although they are often associated with play. In fact, one might even say that Mark attacked this particular challenge with seriousness and discipline. What really marked his behavior was that he felt no sense that he was being evaluated and probably didn't know or care if anybody was watching. In other words, Mark did not feel he had to accomplish anything, to end up liking or mastering a certain apparatus or performing some feat for others to see. His only goal was to
discover and journey across the visual and physical world provided by the playground, without ending his journey at any preordained place. This total separation from an end-product or accomplishment would be a miraculous achievement in today's adult world. For adults, our sense of self in a production-oriented, goal-oriented society is often inescapably connected with our achievements in one form or another. This is perhaps why so few of us in our professional (and sometimes personal) lives risk so little—for fear that something will be expected that we will fail to provide.

There are other noteworthy aspects of Mark's first few moments of playfulness. Mark in a span of minutes moved from one challenge to another, listening only to his innermost feelings. He moved from the swing to the merry-go-round to the monkey-bars. What made him move from one to the other, and how did he come to feel better about his climb to the top of the monkey-bars than about his turn at the swing and merry-go-round?

In true childlike fashion, Mark was on a methodical hunt for what felt good. When he became bored, no longer valued the challenge, or felt dizzy, it was time to move on. However, although his movements might have seemed aimless to a casual observer, Mark was on a hunt. While the sequence of movement might have been arbitrary and may have even influenced his final judgment of what he liked best, it did not make Mark goal-less. His goal was to find what felt good—a journey through the observable texture—not to end at any single place, but to finish with a good feeling and knowledge of what could provide it again. Thus, Mark's journey provided little more, in terms of an end-product, than to make him want to repeat the journey or to push this one to greater heights. Mark was in touch with himself enough to know when to jump off the merry-go-round and try something else. He was also enough in touch with himself to recognize the exhilaration from within for having made it to the top. Mark knew what felt good, and best of all, he did not have to ask anyone. Fortunately, Mark is still too young to have his feelings dictated by a fear of failure or by others who want to impose their feelings on him.

This brings us to another characteristic of Mark's behavior, one that often is lacking in our adult lives. Mark could hear his feelings speak because he was focusing on what he felt. Mark's mind was not on whether anybody was watching, whether he'd get a good grade for climbing to the top, or even what would happen to him if he fell. Instead, in true child fashion, Mark narrowed his attention to what was before him at the moment, blocking out all other thoughts. It was not that Mark focused his attention on only one part of the playground, but rather that all non-playground thoughts were obliterated in the process. In other words, the key to Mark's methodical exploration was not his focus on what was of interest, since that kept changing, but rather that he let no other thoughts interfere or impose themselves, which if allowed into his consciousness might have made his journey more
difficult and certainly less enjoyable. Then Mark would be exploring with less
curiosity and enthusiasm, discovering less, devoting more to who was
watching, how he was performing, or what he thought he should feel.

The special state of being we are describing is a "quiet mind." Children
come by it naturally, and adults lose it quickly due to the hectic pace of their
lives. Recall how good we were as children at blocking out of our minds
everything that was not of immediate interest, sometimes including our
parents’ wishes. Call it forgetfulness, but the truth is that children,
particularly young children, have a greater sense of concentration on things in
which they are interested than do adults. This is not forgetfulness but a
special ability to quiet the mind by blocking out those aspects of our
environment that do not directly complement our innermost feelings. In
today's complicated and frenetic world, the biggest threats to our professional
lives are the interruptions to our concentration that we ourselves let into our
consciousness and feel incapable of controlling. These interruptions are
psychological, not physical—the important difference being that we can learn
(or relearn) to control the former, whereas many times we can do little to
combat the latter.

Mark’s lack of self-defeating or even self-evaluative thoughts was in
part responsible for him becoming one with his feelings and also for his sense
of satisfaction at journey’s end. Mark let his feelings speak, and because he
blocked out any source of competition, he heard what his feelings were
saying—and he knew what they were saying was true.

Small children turn instinctively inward in such situations, never wor-
rying about the validity of their feelings. They trust their instincts, while
many adults have systematically trained themselves to tune out their instincts.
Older children and young adults gradually learn to mistrust their instincts,
looking for external sources of knowledge to guide their actions and, finding
none, wind up in the most reprehensible of states—relying half on their
instincts and half on others around them. To be sure, Mark’s concentration
was not broken by teachers, peers, or the activity and noise around him. His
mind was quiet to these intrusions.

Remarkably, Mark became vulnerable without thinking about his
vulnerability. Mark may have sensed his vulnerability—to fall, to fail to reach
the top, to be humiliated or teased by older playmates—but that was blocked
out in favor of the opportunity this challenge presented. Mark converted his
vulnerability and any perceived danger into opportunity by using only his
own feelings. He did not ask his teachers for more resources—a stepladder to
help in the ascent, a chorus of peers to cheer him on, a safety net to catch him
should he fall. As adults we often turn to external resources as a precondition
for even accepting an opportunity, as though we have convinced ourselves we
will fail without them, or we use them as an excuse for not seizing the
opportunity when our demands for them are not met. How many times as
adults have we said or thought more about the preconditions
than the opportunity and in the process created a reason for not seizing an opportunity?

By committing himself to a state of vulnerability, Mark erased the difference between "inside" and "out." That is, he lost consciousness of the ordinary adult-like distinction between body and mind-between feeling and thinking. Notice that Mark slipped out of mind. There was a continuous flow of energy that connected his physical feats with the emotions and feelings to which they were connected. Mark was in a state of flow, in which parts of him that normally did not work in harmony were synchronous. In flow, body and mind are one. The glue that holds them together is our concentration. What should be noted is how we fail to recognize fully the merit of bridging thought and feelings and how much the world around us tries in earnest to keep them separate. The football player who intercepts a pass and runs through his opponents to score a touchdown has discovered the value of flow, at least in his athletic life. The individual who is frightened to speak and then gives the speech of a lifetime has discovered flow-at least for the occasion. The teacher who finds himself unprepared for a visit from an observer and then teaches from the heart-to a surprised and attentive administrator-has discovered flow.

Flow is the emotional gift that allows us to surpass ourselves time and again, each time raising the standard we expect from ourselves. How do we recapture this natural gift with which we are all born? It cannot be bottled and it is not sold in stores. Many travel far and wide to find it, but this gift is free, if we know how to access it in a world that is organized to keep it secret.

Mark was able to erase the distinction between his mind and body because he was aware of and trusted his feelings, just as a great athlete must trust his or her feelings. No time to think what the coach said or to enlist the memory of past experiences. In short, our best behavior is often rendered when we have no time to think. Thoughts that have not been translated into feelings along the way are of little use at the time they are needed most.

Since we may learn more through our feelings than from any other source, it will be worthwhile to explore the potential of this in the pages ahead. But first, let's summarize some of the things that Mark was experiencing. He was

- Being playful
- Finding what feels good
- Letting his feelings speak
- Focusing on what he felt
- Narrowing his attention
- Quieting his mind
- Letting himself be vulnerable
Although Mark experienced the behaviors listed, his ultimate triumph did not inevitably follow from them. Recall that triumph, in Mark's eyes, could not be climbing to the top of the monkey-bars, since that was not his conscious goal—it just happened. His triumph was not an end-product or destination but the excitement and adventure of going somewhere that provided a challenge. Indeed, given serendipitous events (the monkey-bars being crowded with other children or controlled by bullies), Mark's journey could have focused elsewhere with the same sense of completion, although not anywhere else, since in typical childlike fashion Mark would always gravitate toward what felt good to him.

Mark's apparent triumph, then, is that he began a journey—a disorganized set of experiences that allowed him to explore himself unthreatened or evaluated by the outside world. But, a journey for journey's sake gets boring unless it fills some need. Mark could not express it, but his journey fulfilled a need Mark did not consciously know he had.

Because he was willing to embark on this journey, life paid Mark back for the effort expended, as it has for everyone who has ever taken such a journey. What these travelers have found is that the journey is often better than the destination. Although Mark got only a small dose of it this time, you can be sure he will return for more, if not with this challenge, with another more suited to another time and place. Oddly enough, if Mark's adult world plays its customary role, Mark will journey less and less as he becomes older, since the cost of becoming vulnerable will increase. The stakes, as it were, will be raised the older Mark becomes until, in typical adult fashion, Mark will turn on his numbness amplifier, which at middle age will be going full blast. If Mark is typical of most adults, his journeys may all but have ended, and so will his search for personal meaning—that innermost self that searches for a sense of who you are and where you should be going. Although there may be a resurgence of childlike quests in Mark's later years, when he can safely disregard what others think, it will be too late to have inspired his professional life and his best and most productive years.

There are two aspects of Mark's triumph that may direct his actions in the future. The first is that Mark knows full well that where there is one challenge, there is another even more imposing. After all, this playground may be too small for Mark by the end of the second grade, and then what? There will be another and another, each more imposing than the one before. Mark could not say it but this was a journey that has no end. Of course, on this first day of school he had no inkling of how really endless—and therefore how exciting and adventuresome—it could become, if he maintains his childlike perspective.
The second aspect of Mark's triumph was that he found meaning. Something mysteriously made sense to Mark that didn't make sense before he made it to the top. What made sense was not conscious to Mark, but something fit together that hadn't fit so nicely the day before. Maybe it was a feeling that he could make it to the top, or maybe it was that by making it to the top, the school and playground now became his school and his playground. To be sure, Mark is a different person now than he was before his journey—not a lot different, but enough to guide another adventure and to nurture within him, slowly and subtly, a love of adventure and of learning.

Our purpose in this book will be to show how you can recapture Mark's triumph—to begin a journey to find the frame of mind and mental skills needed to derive personal meaning from the sometimes disorderly currents of life that may be occurring all around you, in your classroom as well as in your personal life. We will revisit what it means in childlike fashion to be playful at teaching, to find what behaviors fit with who you really are, to listen to your feelings to guide appropriate and warn of inappropriate behavior, to find a purpose for teaching that is uniquely your own, and to dispel the many distracting influences coming from outside your classroom and your professional life that can break your concentration and diminish your effectiveness. Most importantly, this book will take you on a search to find personal meaning within the fast-paced events of your own classroom, whereby you will learn to use your feelings to direct many of your actions. We will try not only to recapture much of the excitement and adventure that Mark experienced that first day of school, but we will place the spirit of his journey into the context of your own professional and personal growth.
CHAPTER TWO

Where We Are Today

A rags-to-riches industrialist once said, while remarking on his phenomenal success in overcoming poverty, that an effective leader is someone who can realistically assess the present and then envision what could be in the future. This chapter attempts to put into practice some of this advice by beginning with a realistic assessment of our schools at present, for the purpose of imagining what they could be in the future. The "could be" will be the focus of subsequent chapters.

No one likes to dwell on unpleasantness, which is why so few of us are effective leaders. We spend little time accurately assessing present conditions. Instead, we jump into imagining what it would be like to live in some improved state in the future: a better family life, community, or workplace. In other words, we skip the sometimes difficult task of confronting reality, and as a result our plans, wishes, and aspirations for the future are not built on present conditions that provide the givens of any change for the future. As a result many pictures of the future turn out to be pie-in-the-sky theorizing that cannot ever turn out to be fact. This is why an effective leader begins with the ability to see the present for what it is. We can imagine that many who were born into poverty sometime early in life squarely faced the facts that they were poor and uneducated, came from parents who had few resources, and were not any more intelligent than millions of others who were born into the same state. Without denying these unpleasant facts, they then asked, "And now what can I do about it?"

In this chapter we will explore some of the patterns and trends out of which your professional growth must come.

What Some of the Statistics Say

Schools are no different from life itself—both are constantly changing, creating a kaleidoscopic landscape that keeps most of us running to catch up. Schools and classrooms have not been immune from rapid and irregular
changes that leave their mark on every decade. Catching up to the present is what most of us do, whether we realize it or not, only to find that when we have almost caught up, times again have changed. They were, of course, changing all along, but we were too busy playing catch-up to notice. What have these changes brought to the school and classroom? Let's look at what some have said and are saying about our schools.

There is not an experienced teacher today who does not know things have been and are changing in the classroom. If you are an experienced teacher, you have noticed that the span of individual differences among students in your classroom has become greater. This is the result of important changes in our population.

One of these is that the number of school-age children is increasing. The National School Boards Association (1988-89) reports that in grades K-8, school administrators can expect a 6% increase by the mid-1990s. Although today's enrollment is not as high as record levels of the 1960s, the trend is clearly upward, especially for grades K-8.

From what sector of our population will the increases come? As large numbers of white, middle-aged, baby-boom parents mature past child-rearing age, a growing population of minorities of child-rearing age will contribute to a substantial increase in the number of minority school children well into the next decade. Along with this increase will come a diversity of value systems. As a greater number of minority students enter school systems, they will represent a broader range of socioeconomic levels than ever before and will make their mark on the schools, precluding a simplistic treatment of their emotional and educational needs. This means that for every program for group A, there must be programs for the equally deserving groups B, C, and D. Schools will be (and many already are) legally and ethically caught in the tangle of having to provide for unique subpopulations of learners with different educational needs. Parent tempers will flare and some school boards will be divided between "war zones" representing different constituencies in once-placid communities.

It is widely recognized that by approximately the year 2000 one of the most significant changes in the history of our country will take place. That change will be a turning from a nation with minorities to one of minorities. Indeed, for the school-age population in some states, this is almost the case today. As of 1990, Texas and California had an estimated 49% and 46% minority school age enrollments, respectively (now estimated to be 58% and 54% respectively). South Carolina had 45%, Louisiana had 43%, Georgia and Maryland had 40% each, and the relatively low-population states of Mississippi and New Mexico topped the list with estimated minority enrollments of 56% and 57%, respectively (Educational Research Service, 1990). This trend becomes even stronger if we look at the minority enrollments of some big-city school districts. The statistics are changing so rapidly that accurate data are hard to come by, but the percentages of minority enrollment
reported by the Educational Research Service (1987) for seven of our largest cities around the mid-1980s were: Miami (71%), Philadelphia (73%), New York (74%), Los Angeles (78%), Baltimore (80%), Chicago, (84%), and Detroit (89%).

A Heterogeneous Population

However, even these statistics mask the complexity of educating a heterogeneous population of school children. What these figures do not reveal is that in the future there may be more diverse learning needs within a minority than between minorities, thus making ethnicity and socioeconomic status poor predictors of a child's learning needs. Reducing socioeconomic differences has long been a desired goal of our pluralistic, democratic society, but the future will present its own administrative jungle in determining who needs what educational intervention when.

In addition to a greater school-age population and increase in numbers of minority children, there are at least two other sources contributing to the range of individual differences in today's classrooms. These sources are the disadvantaged and special education students who make up a larger share of our student population. Disadvantaged is a broad and overused term; its meaning is no longer synonymous with being a member of a minority.

First, as the numbers of minority children rapidly increase, in schools where many or nearly all students are from minority groups, the association becomes meaningless. When these schools are examined closely, it becomes apparent that contained within them are many different levels and types of disadvantagedness, precluding any simplistic treatment of the learning needs within any group. Second, as parental values and the structure of families change across our nation, disadvantaged kids (unable or unprepared to learn in the traditional classroom) are appearing among all socioeconomic classes. There is little distinction between the readiness to learn and to profit from school for a black or Hispanic inner-city poverty child and a white suburban kid of middle or high socioeconomic level, who also may live in a single parent household in which the only adult is gone 12 hours a day and has little time to provide a model of the self-discipline, motivation, and study habits important to school-age learners.

The Family and the Diminishing Effects of Socioeconomic Status

In the last 30 years, the composition of the family has undergone a dramatic change. The traditional family unit is no longer the rule but the exception. It
is estimated that 70% of working-age mothers from all socioeconomic levels are in the work force, leaving at least 4 million latch-key children of school age at home alone (Hodgkinson, 1988). As recently as 1955, more than 60% of American families were traditional, with a working father and a mother who kept house and took care of the children. Only 10% of today's families represent the traditional family of past generations. The Internal Revenue Service currently recognizes no fewer than 13 variations of the family. Today's family is more likely to be a dual-career family, a single-parent family, a stepfamily, or a family that has moved an average of 14 times. This, together with the estimate that 50% of the children born in 1983 will live with only one parent before reaching the age of 18, will serve to separate the term disadvantaged from minority in theory as well as in practice. In the future both extremes of the socioeconomic spectrum will produce large numbers of latchkey children, who acquire an adult lifestyle at an early age and have little time for or patience with the uninviting atmosphere of many of our nation's schools.

Another reason socioeconomic status will no longer accurately predict disadvantagedness is apparent when we consider the changes in standard of living. A study by the Joint Economic Committee of Congress (Davidson and Rees-Mogg, 1987) showed that between the years 1973 and 1985 the average family lost $1,724 in income, with the largest losses coming from families with school-age children. Due to inflation, households with school-age children actually lost an average of $3,152, not including increases in taxes and number of hours worked. In other words, despite increases in the number of mothers working, real income of the typical family with school-age children has actually fallen. The United States government reports that over a million children today have a higher poverty rate than at any other time since it began collecting data. Fewer involved parents, more distracting lifestyles, greater job and occupational stress, the increased rate of divorce, and pursuit of a better standard of living all have contributed to breaking the stereotypic notion that "disadvantaged" means poor and minority. Levin (1986) has estimated about one-third of all school-age children are educationally disadvantaged. Even more alarming are his statistics that show the serious economic and social consequences of this number later in life, including a high rate of unemployment, low income, dependence on public assistance, and higher criminal involvement.

The Special Learner in the Regular Classroom

One of the most visible sources of the increasing range of individual differences in today's classroom has been Public Law 94-142, which in 1976 mandated that all special education students be educated in the "least
restrictive environment” conducive to their maximum development. Beginning shortly thereafter, the regular classroom became the least restrictive environment for some of these children. The administrative and philosophical changes necessary to implement this historic law took the better part of a decade and, as with any new policy and the service delivery programs required, resources in many cases have not kept pace with need. Trained aides and instructional materials to assist the regular classroom teacher have not always measured up to the demand, in some classrooms placing a heavy burden on the regular teacher to mainstream the special student. This is not to say that most teachers do not herald this innovative legislation as a benefit to both the handicapped learner and the society at large, into which these children are better able to become integrated and productive. However, like the changing definition of disadvantagedness, the changing definition of the regular classroom as a result of Public Law 94-142 has been, for most regular classroom teachers, a mixed blessing. It has considerably broadened the instructional responsibilities of the teacher and further increased the already broad range of differences within the classroom.

The Effects of the Lack of Role Models

In addition to greater individual differences and fewer involved parents, teachers today must combat the increasing lack of role models conducive to disciplined learning. The primary sources contributing to this lack are familiar to many parents: media, drugs, sex, cars, and the jobs necessary to pay for them. These are severely distracting and often disabling influences on the attention of learners in any classroom. Let’s see how they work to make educating Johnny more difficult today than perhaps at any time in our nation's history.

Although now somewhat outdated, a study reported by the American Association of School Administrators (1988) estimated that there were more than 20,000 scenes of suggested sexual intercourse, sexual comment, and innuendo between unmarried people shown in a year of prime-time television. Some statistics now estimate that television transmits more than 65,000 sexual messages each year, and these estimates do not even include the explicit sexual conduct now commonplace on the big screen; on the average the typical teen attends movies once each week. In a 1986 Harris poll conducted for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (Harris & Associates, 1986), a large number of the teens told researchers that they believed television gives a realistic picture of such topics as sexually transmitted diseases (45%), pregnancy and the consequences of sex (41%), family planning to prevent pregnancy (28%), and people making love (24%). Few teachers in the junior and senior high school can doubt the force media exerts on the lives of their
students, who sometimes can be seen carrying on lifestyles acquired almost solely from role models in the media. The 1986 Harris survey found that television and movies had the greatest influence on fourth graders in making drugs and alcohol seem attractive. From the fifth grade on, peers played an increasingly important role, and television and movies consistently had the second greatest influence.

How do drugs affect a teacher's role in the classroom? Research reported by the U.S. Department of Education in 1986 suggests that drug use among children may be ten times more prevalent than we suspect. Here are some of the most recent statistics.

• The U.S. has the highest rate of teenage drug use of any industrialized nation.
• 61% of high school seniors in the U.S. have used drugs.
• 57% of students buy most of their drugs at school.
• 33% of high school seniors who have used marijuana report having used it at school.
• 66% of seniors who have used amphetamines report having taken them at school.

Although there are some recent signs that drug use is decreasing, the percentage of students using drugs by the sixth grade has tripled over the last decade. In the early 1980s marijuana use was virtually nonexistent among 13-year-olds; now, 1 in 6 reports having smoked marijuana, and the marijuana today is from 5 to 20 times stronger than that used just 10 years ago. Experts have long agreed that drug use creates a psychological dependence or bonding with the drug that can have deleterious effects on school performance and can destroy ties to family, friends, and lifelong interests. It is now suspected that some smart kids—those with high SAT or ACT scores who do not express a desire to attend college—may have had their psychological dispositions altered by drug use. More than half of all adolescent suicides are suspected to be drug-related. Drug use has been unmistakably tied to

• An erosion of the self-discipline and motivation required for learning
• Truancy and dropping out of school
• Crime and misconduct that disrupt an orderly and safe atmosphere conducive to learning

For example, among high school seniors, heavy drug users are 2–12 times as likely to vandalize school property and almost 3 times as likely to be involved in school fights. Not coincidentally, 44% reported they sold drugs and 3% stole from family, friends, and employers to pay for drugs. When
the American public was asked in a 1988 Gallup Poll what was the biggest problem facing our schools, 32% said "use of drugs by students." "Lack of discipline" was mentioned by only 19% of the respondents, although this response was first in 17 previous polls (with the exception of 1971). Clearly many of the respondents in this poll had experienced the drug issue, if not directly through their own children and loved ones, then indirectly through friends.

If the influence of drugs were not enough to dishearten many educators, a sober look at the effect of teenage sex on today's classrooms surely would. Teenage sex translates into teenage pregnancy in a fairly direct way, despite the numerous products on the market to prevent just such an equation. Of every 100 children born today, 12 will be born out of wedlock, and 50% of the children born out of wedlock are from teenage mothers. Here are some other disconcerting facts about teen pregnancy, provided by data from the Children's Defense Fund (1986, 1988), the National Research Council (1987), and the Alan Guttmacher Institute (1986).

- More than 1 million teens-1 in 10-become pregnant each year. Nearly 30,000 of these are under the age of 15.
- Before leaving high school, one girl in four will experience pregnancy.
- Half the teenagers who become parents before they are 18 will not receive a high school diploma by the time they are in their twenties.
- One study in a major city found that the suicide rate of teenage mothers is seven times higher than for other teenagers.
- Teens most likely to become pregnant are also those least able to cope with it: teens who live in urban centers, are poor, whose parents have limited education, who live with only one parent, and who have poor academic skills.
- Teenage girls with poor academic skills are five times as likely to become mothers before the age of 16 as are teenagers with average or above average skills in school.

The themes common to teenage pregnancy are poverty, poor academic skills, low self-esteem, and a single-parent household or a household that has experienced a divorce or separation. On the other hand, there is some evidence to suggest that teens who feel positive about themselves, have good academic records, are involved in sports or other extracurricular activities, and come from two-parent households are the least likely to become teenage parents.

The significant influence of jobs and cars, which often are linked in the life of a teenager, must be added to our equation. Many teachers will recognize that these two ingredients represent the factors that amplify all other sources of influence. As any parent or teacher knows, along with the
automobile comes the job, if not to pay for the car, then to pay for its insurance, gas and, upkeep. Teachers even more than parents know the significant impact cars have on kids in their classrooms—or are about to have.

First in the junior high and early high school years, idle conversations, school essays, and wishes for a freer, more independent lifestyle are centered around cars. Later, they affect most teachers’ classrooms, if not by competition with school assignments, then in the form of sluggishness and fatigue caused by hours spent at after-school jobs to pay for the car. This is one of the secret sides of the classroom that few but the teacher can truly appreciate.

It is the subtle effect of the car—its competition with the less inviting aspects of the classroom, the related commitment to work after (and sometimes before) school—that can be masked almost everywhere but in the classroom, which requires not just the presence of a warm body but a body that is alert, mentally active, and willing to submit to the demands of learning. This is often too much for a working student whose schedule must sandwich school between job, peers, and courtship. Is it any wonder that some kids turn to drugs and alcohol, just as do some of our most talented professionals and athletes who must cope with a hectic, performance-oriented lifestyle and all of the accompanying stress and frustration?

Consider for a moment that many kids also live high-tech lifestyles and encounter psychological side effects that require escape as a result. For many of these kids, school becomes a place to rest and replenish their energy before the onslaught of activity at the end of the school day. Needless to say, this makes the span of individual differences within a classroom even greater, in that only some learners will be ready and willing to learn. In other words, on some days some potential learners will not be teachable under any circumstances—a fact some administrators rarely admit and classroom observers rarely take into account.

These facts of school life have already begun to change the nature of our schools—in the form of the material taught, accountability of both students and teachers, and heterogeneity of and tolerance toward competing value systems. Let’s look at these effects on the school curriculum.

The Changing School Curriculum

There is now a general belief that the curriculum reform movements of the past decade, and the state and local policy changes that followed them, have brought significant changes to the school environment. Most noticeable among them has been an expanded school curriculum, both upward to include more advanced-placement and precollege curriculum and downward to include more basic literacy and skills for learning. Both sets of changes
have stemmed from the same source: the poor or declining performance of students on standardized tests of achievement, detected nearly a decade ago, and the changing social and economic needs they represent. The general thrust has been that our schools must do more for more varied types of learners. Others, many teachers included, say our schools may be trying to do everything for everyone. A comprehensive school curriculum today may mean teaching, among other topics:

- Skills for basic literacy (reading, writing, speaking)
- Knowledge for admission to advanced training (preparation for SAT, ACT)
- Occupational and job-related training (from cosmetology to computer technology)
- Advanced placement courses and programs for the gifted and talented
- Sex education, health, and nutrition
- Child care to school-age mothers

As most teachers will attest, more time is being spent in classrooms today in teaching basic literacy and skills for learning and living than at any time in the past. The reasons are complex, but many standardized tests and teachers' own struggles to get the course material across indicate student deficiencies in the basics needed to profit from school. These deficiencies cannot be solely attributed to disadvantaged minority youth, as is sometimes believed. For example, one national study reported that half of our 17-year-old high school students couldn't handle the simple mathematics necessary for determining the area of a rectangle (Hodgkinson, 1988; Educational Testing Service, 1986). In other words, students may not have sufficient skills to make it as tradesmen. The study goes on to confirm that most of the 17-year-olds could do simple arithmetic, but only 6% could handle problems that took several steps. Perhaps worse yet, the study found that two-thirds of students couldn't place the Civil War within the correct half-century.

Business leaders, through their participation on influential curriculum reform committees at the state and national level, have been instrumental in pushing the school curriculum toward greater emphasis on basic literacy. Some business leaders have called the public schools "a failed monopoly"; it has been estimated that businesses spend $25 billion a year in teaching new employees skills they should have acquired in school. Military leaders often join business leaders in lamenting that precious training time and funds must be spent in teaching new recruits to read, write, and listen attentively.

While some teachers recognize the need to remediate basic deficiencies before teaching the regular school curriculum, others are worried that too much time is devoted to low-level skills training, leaving inadequate time for covering the meat of the curriculum. Also, it is notorious that one school
district's "meat" may look a lot like another's "dessert" when local curriculum guides in a subject are examined. In the past decade many district curriculum guides have been written and rewritten in an attempt to present legislatively prescribed content in a manner that works for the range of student population and readiness that exists in that district. Large districts with a heterogeneous school population, usually situated in or around urban areas, have been forced to extend their curriculum both up and down the ability ladder. Programs for the gifted and talented are on the rise as are advanced-placement classes that give students a jump start on their college curriculum by providing them the training and opportunity to earn college credit. Also, many teachers, especially in English and math, are spending increasing amounts of time on remedial topics.

In other schools, relatively small numbers of students huddle together in advanced tracks, so much so that they rarely come in contact with students outside their own cliques. This creates a polarity of students within a school that might have been impossible years ago. Contrary to the original notion of a comprehensive high school advanced more than 30 years ago (Conant, 1959), with today's heterogeneity of student body and curriculum, the typical high school has become many schools within a school, loosely coupled by the superficiality of eating together in the school cafeteria, showing up at the same sporting events, and attending the occasional assembly or pep rally. Underneath the facade are varieties of values and levels of readiness that defy a common meaning or purpose. In other words, students inside schools have become as diverse as the communities outside of them and, in some instances, schools have become instruments for increasing this diversity.

The Increasing Role of Testing

As the outcome of schooling has become more difficult to control, let alone guarantee, because of this diversity, attempts have been made to standardize the product. Hence, some states test at certain grades for minimum competency, and many high schools now require a graduation proficiency test. For those states that do not test and for some that do, colleges and employers willingly provide a test whose purpose it is to spot deficiencies in reading, writing, and math early and to suggest high school-level remediation on the job or in addition to the required college curriculum. Junior colleges are being flooded with students seeking remediation in order to go on to higher forms of employment and other institutions of higher learning. By some estimates, a third of these junior college students are so unprepared that they can not complete the coursework specifically designed for them (Roueche & Baker, 1987).
Also, in some states the minimum competency idea has not been limited to students. In these states, teachers and administrators must prove that they are competent at the job they are assigned to perform. Depending on their performance assessments, they too might be required to remediate deficiencies through additional coursework, workshops, and supervision. Many teacher preparation programs now require pre-professional skills testing both before and after training; over half of our 50 states now link teaching performance in the classroom to a career ladder offering salary enhancements and advanced assignments, such as mentoring and curriculum development.

Teacher Proficiency

Just as national forces were largely responsible for the curriculum reform of the 1980s, they are also working to reform the teaching profession. In a 1988 Gallup Poll, 86% of the respondents said that they would favor establishment of a national set of standards for the certification of public school teachers. This same group indicated that they would support an increased pay scale for teachers who proved themselves. This is not difficult to understand in light of one other question they were asked. When asked about the factors that will determine America's strength in the future, 88% said "developing the best educational system in the world" was the most important factor, while "efficient industrial production" and "a strong military" were ranked a distant second (65%) and third (47%).

It is no secret in the education profession that the Holmes Group, a consortium of some of our nation's most respected teacher training institutions, now advocates a nationally standardized test for all teachers on the methods of teaching (Holmes Group, 1986). This is a monumental event in the history of teacher certification, and the proposal already boasts large numbers of supporters as well as some critics. No one as yet has devised a universally acceptable way of measuring a teacher's pedagogical skill-as opposed to his or her knowledge of English or math. The test being developed by researchers at Stanford University with support from the Carnegie-Mellon Foundation not only is pedagogically focused but will attempt to relate a minimum score to national teacher certification, which may be required by some states. As has been the case with tests of student proficiency in the 1980s, teachers can expect a flurry of activity and much controversy over teacher proficiency in the 1990s. Hence the perceived heterogeneity among teachers has spawned a strong response at the national level as well, and in the midst of such diversity, perceived or real, there will be attempts to guarantee the competence of teachers.
Changes in Power and Politics

What do these changes portend for the American classroom of the future? Most experts agree that as the disadvantaged school-age population increases—including those from middle- and upper-class families—it will form an underclass of a dual society (Levin, 1986). Indeed, this underclass has been in the making for sometime in the presence of the poor, Black and Hispanic, and inner-city ghetto children. However, now—and this is the contribution of the past two decades—it is joined by children of all races and socioeconomic classes, not just racial and ethnic minorities and persons from economically disadvantaged origins. This underclass is destined to face high unemployment or underemployment, low earnings, and, for the most part, menial occupations. However, now they have the beginnings of what poor inner-city minorities didn’t have two decades ago, and that is political power. With their rapidly increasing numbers and representatives from middle and upper socioeconomic levels, they will have greater access to those who must listen to their needs—and listen attentively—if they themselves are to stay in power. Many federal and some local programs today are evidence of the articulate nature of the new disadvantaged. Starting with Public Law 94-142 and now extending to drug prevention programs, sex education programs, suicide prevention programs, and a host of remedial/tutorial programs, the pressure for more and better programs will not abate. This trend will not abate because not only is the number of school-age children increasing who will need these programs, but because this hitherto small and inarticulate group will have far greater influence on the professional fortunes of school officials, federal and state legislators, and the media who will effectively communicate their needs to a much wider audience.

Years ago school boards and administrators could readily dismiss the needs of a relatively small disadvantaged group with little or no political clout. Today, the tables have turned, and smart school officials and legislators are actively looking for needs to serve before such needs generate a media event that threatens their careers or funding for other cherished initiatives. This is not to diminish the importance of these needs or the pressures that make the democratic process work. The momentum of specialized school programs will continue well into the next century, expanding the school curriculum still further and severely straining school budgets and community coffers that must pay for them.

In some of our most disadvantaged school districts in and around larger urban centers, the specter of a dual society suggests political conflict and potential social upheaval in the years ahead. Needs will outstrip resources and push may well come to shove. Individuals may be elected to school boards to represent political factions, with the feeling that one group’s need should take precedence over another. This is already a familiar sight in some parts of
the country, rendering school officials hostage to the continued political in-
fighting that precedes every budget expenditure of any consequence. In at
least one state, legislation is being considered that would allow the state to
disband by decree any school board whose actions delay or become damaging
to the orderly functioning of a school district.

As we saw from earlier statistics, the numbers of disadvantaged learners
will continue to increase in many states, soon to constitute the majority of the
school population and the majority of voters as these students reach
adulthood. From growing up in a democracy, they will have learned to sup-
port social movements that improve their well-being. As Henry Levin, author
of *Educational Reform for Disadvantaged Students. An Emerging Crisis*
(1986) put it, "Economic and education inequality in conjunction with equal
political rights suggest future polarization and intense conflict." This situation
can lead to serious political conflict and even, in some areas, social disruption,
and it is sure to increase the cost of already overburdened school budgets.
Community tax bases from which the majority of school budgets are derived
are already shrinking in those areas of the country having the largest numbers
of disadvantaged. Those states and industries most populated by the
disadvantaged will have to contend with more poorly trained, less mentally
healthy, and more uncommitted workers as a result of shrinking school
budgets that were inadequate to address students' needs earlier in life. Some
experts predict a cycle of escalating costs for public assistance, criminal
justice, and mental health, while the ability to fund these services will continue
to erode in the communities and regions that need them the most.

**Trends in the Classroom**

How will these changes affect the classroom teacher? Even if only some of
what has been pictured above comes about, all of the following surely will.
Your future in the classroom will increasingly be defined by:

- More decisions having to be made by you concerning individual learners,
due to the growing complexity of the district, state, and national rules and
legislation under which schools must operate. Look for political changes in
other parts of the system-city, state, and nation-to be communicated swiftly
down to the lowest unit-your classroom.
- Participation by more decision-makers, vested interest groups, and minority
parents in determining the curriculum of your school.
- An increase in debilitating economic cycles; unexpected lawsuits challenging
the fairness of the school curriculum and the competence of its staff; teacher
flight to smaller, more prestigious suburban and
semi-rural schools; and state expenditures based more on politics at the moment than long-range plans for the future.

- Community demands for schools to address specific problems of urgency-drug addiction, teen suicide, alcohol abuse, sex education, dropout prevention, and basic literacy, among others that will arise as the result of value changes.
- Reduced flexibility in responding to these problems due to diminishing resources and a decreasing tax base in some of our largest cities.
- More rigidly prescribed curriculum, as a result of reform committees and new education codes and policies at the state and school district levels.
- Increasingly restrictive state and federal laws and an increasing morass of paperwork for teachers as well as administrators-created by the anticipation of lawsuits by a more informed and articulate underclass; threats to the system by those who are consistently neglected by it.
- More student testing and teacher appraisal in response to the increasingly heterogeneity among the ranks of both students and teachers. Tests and evaluation procedures will increasingly be seen as tools that can fix much of what is perceived to be wrong with our schools. Unfortunately, for some they will represent the only tools and therefore be used as a political means to fix everything.
- The need for students to seek out trusting long-term relationships with adults outside the home, of whom teachers will be one of the most important. The changing composition of the family will surely make the teacher-family-school connection increasingly important in the years ahead.

Focus on the Learner-Coping With Diversity

Years ago, teachers dealt with students as classes or as homogeneously grouped learners within a class. In the future students will be increasingly recognized as individual learners requiring different instructional strategies and content, perhaps even individual levels of emotional support and motivation. Yesterday, the question on many teachers' minds was, "How can my students be taught the assigned curriculum in the allotted time?" Today, the question is, "How can the curriculum be taught in any amount of time?" Before, it might have taken a week to teach a unit. Now, due to our increasingly heterogeneous classrooms, it may take twice as long and the brighter students become bored in the process. For the classroom teacher this means that in the future there will be longer learning cycles involving many more decisions, requiring a larger menu of teaching strategies-patience being one of the most important. Planning for individual differences, patience, and
the ability to develop long-term relationships with learners that can evoke their commitment to the goals of your classroom will be needed to succeed as a teacher in the future.

If these trends are correct, the teacher of tomorrow will have to learn how to make the school curriculum come alive for every learner. The first thing a learner will want and need in the future is a trusting long-term relationship with a teacher. Most present-day teachers are "selling" course content, but what some may not realize is that in the future students will be "buying" relationships. Content quickly loses purpose outside of a trusting relationship that places it in the context of personal growth. Deep inside, every school-age child wants to grow. As a teacher, if you show you are willing to help students grow, first they will open their hearts to you and then their minds.

These are some of the trends facing teachers today. Just as this cycle of change ends, another will surely take its place to knock the props from under those who are unprepared to adapt and change with the environment around them. How to become a committed and effective teacher in the midst of rapid cycles of value change will be the focus of the chapters ahead.
CHAPTER THREE

Stages of Professional Growth

No matter how talented or knowledgeable a teacher you are, you have just so much time with your students. You can't beg for more, ask for brighter students, or obtain resources that would magically make your life in the classroom easier or more enjoyable. So you have a choice: You can let life in your classroom just sort of happen and watch it slip by, or you can use your talents and knowledge to change your classroom.

How can you make everyday events in your classroom more enjoyable? That's the $64,000 question. In the pages ahead we will explore some of the ways you can make your professional life more enjoyable. This enjoyment will not come from traditional sources such as new teaching methods, classroom management procedures, instructional media and resources, or your curriculum. It will come from your own professional and personal growth and will require much the same behaviors spontaneous to Mark in his quest in Chapter 1. These behaviors are within us all from birth, but they must be relearned to make them useful in our adult professional lives.

The previous chapter recounted some of the realities of your classroom now and in the immediate future. It painted a profile of a typical learner who

• Exhibits the effects of poor or spotty previous instruction
• Is primarily under the influence of peer group and media values
• May have uncooperative or poorly disciplined work habits
• May have come from a single-parent household

These are all relatively new additions to the American classroom, at least on as grand a scale as we see them now and can expect to see them in the near future.

The most indispensable tool for a teacher in the present age is the ability to remain calm in the midst of rapid and unsettling changes. The teacher who will best survive the present age must fit Kipling's description of one
who keeps his head while others are losing theirs—and some of those about you will lose their heads in more ways than one.

They will not only be flustered by the quick pace of the changes going on around them, they will turn inward to live in the confines of their self-imposed numbness, losing their sense of value—that innermost quality that tells them what is right and what is wrong. The effective teacher of the future must be unfreakable. The word unfreakable refers not to a teacher’s ability to bury his or her head in the sand at the first sight of unsettling change, but to the ability to see what is really happening all around and to respond actively and appropriately to a changing environment. This requires a mind that is clear because it is calm. It involves realistically assessing the present and being able to envision what could be in the future.

Although it may at first seem surprising, we grow and become more intelligent most quickly in a changing, disordered environment. We need only think about the turbulent process by which our own planet was formed. It was formed at the time of the "big bang" out of chaos from which life eventually emerged. This life emerged, first in the form of an organic soup and, then much later, in the form of prehistoric man, by using the variety provided by a disorganized environment. Anything more placid would not have provided the variety and, therefore, opportunities for life to emerge as we know it. A disordered environment that provided one dangerous opportunity after another provided a chance for the development of our intelligence. Scientists even have a name for such an environment, since it has become such an important and recurring event in all of the sciences. They call it entropy—a state of disequilibrium and disorder.

There is, whether we like it or not, or admit it or not, some disorder in the state of our schools. The old is clashing with the new, subcultures with subcultures, value systems with value systems, providing results unforeseen only a few decades ago. Indeed, we have reached a point of dangerous opportunity. There is an opportunity to use the disorganization to grow and develop. That was why a recounting of what some have said about our schools was necessary in the previous chapter. If only some of that turns out to be true, a state of uncertainty and reorganization is sure to follow. In 50 to 100 years, someone else will be writing about another, new disequilibrated state of affairs.

Watzawick, Wenkland, and Fisch, in Change, said it best when they wrote, "It makes a difference whether we consider ourselves pawns in a game whose rules we call reality or as players in a game who know the rules as 'real' only to the extent that we have created or accepted them." Their words underscore the importance of change: Once we see and can accept it, we realize how easily we can create it and, like prehistoric man once seeing the variety of opportunity provided by the complexity of the environment about him, can mold that variety to our own wishes and liking.
There is little doubt that the greater variety being interjected into our culture and schools from the democratic, pluralistic process under which we have chosen to live has created shorter cycles of value change. This in turn has made teaching more complicated, competitive, and complex than ever before in the history of our nation. Some have even estimated that the cycle of value change that occurs within our culture is becoming shorter in quantum leaps. For example, a set of values affecting a whole culture in the first part of this century might have taken 50 years—almost a lifetime—to become recognizably different to the perception of those living within it. In other words, individuals born of the same generation could expect the same value system to be in place for most of their adult lives. However, most of us have experienced changes in values occurring in much shorter periods of time and most importantly, repeatedly throughout our adult working lives. Values of the eighteenth century that took 100 or more years to become entrenched in our culture may have taken 50 years to change in the twentieth century.

These value shifts are becoming shorter, so that values established over 50 years in the first part of this century can now be seen changing in far less time. Some suggest the pace of value change in the future will be geometric, and there is ample evidence that they are right. Many of the values established in the 2(1-year period between 1945 and 1965—as shown by lifestyle preferences, family structures, childrearing practices, courting traditions, and consumption trends—were transmuted into new values between the years 1965 and 1980, showing only a 15-year cycle of value change. If these trends continue, we may soon be experiencing even shorter cycles of value change, an event unthinkable only a century ago.

This is part of the disordered environment for which the classroom teacher must be prepared in the future. Rapid change is not a phenomenon the human species accepts willingly, although humans' adaptability to change has been nothing short of remarkable. Cultural value shifts within our lifetime knock the props out from under the very stability we seek in our personal and professional lives. Many cultures throughout history have developed mechanisms for slowing the pace of value change by the formal and informal transmission of existing values through school curriculum, laws, and standards of conduct.

This was much more easily done when value cycles were 50 or more years in duration. The culture that propounded them was homogeneous. Schools today, and our culture at large, are anything but homogeneous, which has been largely responsible for our shifting values and the inability of formal mechanisms of the past to preserve any single set of values. If the past is any prediction of the future, value cycles will become increasingly shorter, providing less stability and direction over the course of our professional lives.

Experienced teachers know full well the situation I am describing. Many have already lived through one or more value cycles during their professional
New teachers can expect to meet and cope with three or maybe more value shifts, some of which may be occurring simultaneously. Although some of our radio stations may bring us back to the more comfortable years of "oldies but goodies," our classrooms will have no such aids to ward off the value shifts of the future.

Without a unified set of values transmitted from the culture, where do we obtain direction and guidance? This is one of the most important questions of our day, and it happens to be the point of this book. The teachers of the future will not have the external stability of a single homogeneous set of values to direct their lives and the lives of those in their classrooms. For years teachers were taught that they were the transmitters of these values, aided by textbooks, curriculum guides, and state agencies. As some teachers have discovered, imposing a single set of values derived primarily from the Anglo-Saxon tradition on a heterogeneous school population does not work nearly as well today as it did thirty years ago. Diversity within the classroom has proven more forceful in affecting the behavior of the typical teacher than any abstract set of values that exists outside of it. The effective teachers of today take their cues from those sitting in the seats in front of them. They ask, What are they like? Where do they come from? What are they likely to be able to learn? What classroom organization will be most conducive to their learning? With what teaching methods can they be reached? With each value cycle, the fit with individual learners will change, preventing any universal and culturally transmitted definition of effective teaching. Just as teachers are finding now that they must adjust the curriculum for almost every learner, they will need to acquire and be able to implement many new approaches in ever-shorter cycles, just to keep pace with changes occurring within and across subpopulations of learners.

Where does this leave teachers? Quite frankly, if they are taught as many teachers are today, it may leave them poorly prepared to cope with the rapidity of change that lies ahead in their professional lives. This is because much of teacher training today is technique-oriented, not growth-oriented. Even the newest techniques and concepts will quickly become obsolete in this day of rapid change—much more quickly in fact than when many teacher trainers were teachers. Even such new and important concepts as self-regulated learning, cooperative learning, and metacognition will be replaced by others more suited to the quickly approaching values of the future. As value cycles become shorter, teachers will need to learn on the job what in years past could be learned at the teacher training institution and then carried to the classroom. Indeed, the problem in some classrooms today is that teachers are teaching precisely as they were taught to teach—thirty years ago—without realizing one and perhaps two value cycles have occurred in the interim, making much of what they do obsolete and inconsistent with the values of those they are teaching.
The key to this dilemma and the point of this chapter is growth. Growth is that marvelous quality that allows change to come smoothly under the most difficult of circumstances. In fact, real growth can come only under the most difficult of circumstances. The origin of human life ignored poets, prisoners in concentration camps, scientists working against the grain: All provide evidence that growth has occurred under the most unfavorable conditions. We are now at a point when growth is likely, simply because we are living in a time of rapid change that provides variety and therefore the opportunity to grow.

Let it be said that few teachers are trained in how to grow and fewer still are encouraged to grow by the working conditions in which they find themselves. Growth, unfortunately, is not a topic that comes up in teacher training programs and often is not a part of inservice either. The reason is that the kind of growth we are talking about has little to do with teaching skills, competencies, or proficiencies—the focus of many preservice and inservice programs. The growth that we must learn is the same that came naturally to Mark. The task in our adult lives is to reacquire our childlike abilities to grow, which for many of us have been replaced by numbness. Just as was the case with Mark's experiences, our growth must come from within ourselves, independent of our environment, whose value shifts and disorder can no longer provide the stability and direction needed for growth. From within ourselves can come a quiet mind that provides the basis for acquiring stability and direction. Developing, accessing, and being able to use the power of a quiet mind in the midst of a disordered environment is key to the growth we will be seeking in this and later chapters. Our discussion will focus on four areas of growth that will be influenced by:

• How you choose to see things
• What you focus on
• How aware you are of yourself
• What you value

You will be clearly outstanding in your classroom if you have an outlook, focus, self-awareness, and purpose that let you grow and change with the complexity you will find around you.

In the remaining portions of this chapter we will review some of the ways teachers have tried to cope with shorter cycles of value change. We begin first with two approaches that typically have diminished a teacher's responsiveness to change and will end with a third that will consume much of our attention in later chapters.

One of the ways in which teachers have dealt with shorter cycles of value change is through shock. Shock is being stopped in your tracks, accepting the sting, trying to minimize the personal damage, and sometimes trying to hide it. Alvin Toffler (1970) named it “future shock.” Shock is
• Learning that your best friend made it to the next step on the career ladder and you didn't
• Finding out unexpectedly at the beginning of the school year that your class schedule has been changed
• Discovering that one of your best students is pregnant
• Being called an obscene word in front of the class
• Having a parent curse you out after you take the time to call about a missed assignment
• Receiving a reprimand from your principal for allowing a fight to occur in your classroom, although you could not have prevented it

Each of these incidents and the many others like them that happen to teachers each day in the classroom are the result of value changes. For many teachers these incidents seemed impossible when they were in school and when they first began teaching. They are the result of a new value system replacing another. The immediate response to these observable value changes for many of us is shock-shock, dismay and disbelief that those things are really happening in our classroom and school. Our response is to assume a set of behaviors that are dramatically opposite to those of Mark on the playground. There is no time or place for playfulness and vulnerability here. Instead, threats, anger, fear, and even selfishness take hold, followed by a self-imposed numbness in the hope of being less vulnerable to these onslaughts on our respect and dignity the next time they occur. So the process continues as each new insult to our values occurs, each time turning up our numbness amplifiers to avoid the distress. Before long we block out so much of life around us that we hardly notice events that are out of the ordinary—both good and bad.

Many of our first-year teachers, especially in large urban districts—the ones to which many of the statistics in Chapter 2 pertain—are in a state of shock throughout most of their first year of teaching. They have not yet learned how to turn up their numbness amplifiers to suppress the noise of another value system and so are almost constantly on the rebound—trying to recover from the latest insult to their value system. They are perpetually exhausted, both emotionally and physically, by the continuous onslaught of events to which much of their own upbringing and university training was oblivious.

Some teachers may take longer than others but most gradually learn to cope with the dissonance between what they have been brought up or trained to believe and what they see. Unfortunately, those whose response is shock cope largely either by gradually increasing their level of numbness to an intensity that matches the distress that threatens their emotional well-being, or by trying to impose their own sense of order upon the disordered environment around them. The latter strategy, although laudable, rarely
works, at least not for long. It usually fails for two reasons. The first is that the emotional energy and continuous vigilance needed to create the desired change generally far outstrips the level that most teachers can supply on a day-to-day basis. If the energy needed is not there, the dissonance returns.

Second, creating order out of disorder is only replacing one value system with another. Unless students see the value to themselves of any new set of values, they will see only an attempt to usurp what they have been taught in our democratic, pluralistic culture is their right to believe and behave as they please. This is one of the ironies of growing up in a pluralistic democracy. At an early age we learn our rights, but it is only much later in life that we fully understand that with them come responsibilities and the concept of the common good. This unschooled knowledge is the blunt instrument with which many school-age children respond to perceived attacks on their individual freedom.

The result is, on the one hand, the tuning out of a discordant value system, and on the other, a feeble and often failed attempt to wage a fight against insurmountable odds. Teachers whose shock leads to numbness learn to survive and make it through the day. Teachers whose shock leads to a combative response usually fail sooner or later, from emotional and physical exhaustion amplified by the growing awareness that the system—the school administrators, peers, and parents—has also given up the fight, leaving more than a few teachers with an acute sense of despair from which some never recover.

A second way in which teachers have dealt with shorter value cycles has been by following. Following is changing incrementally, slowly, as the evidence before you tells you that you are out of step. You follow the lead of others only after the majority have committed themselves to change and your recalcitrant behavior is about to become obvious to others and embarrassing to you. It is changing in many small steps with no overall vision. Changing by following is provoked by discovering you're the only teacher who

- Grades for neatness
- Calls parents' homes for missing assignments
- Doesn't have a learning center
- Gives disciplinary referrals for talking back
- Gives students practice tests
- Doesn't know how to use the department computer

Each of these features and others like them can make the teacher a follower. The process by which this result is accomplished is slow and imperceptible. When we follow, we change without knowing it and many times in ways that are unconnected to what we really want to do or believe. Pressure is exerted by our environment, unknown to us, that influences us to move
toward some things and away from others—regardless of whether this movement is in harmony or discordant with our own system of values. The movement—or so-called progress—we make is conveniently disguised, and the fact that it represents the values of others that may or may not be congruent with our own never becomes apparent. Thus, we drift toward what feels good to others, often as a result of happenstance and the survival attempts of others in a disordered environment.

Much of the behavior of some teachers can be attributed to following. They are the ones who are always looking around for what to do, getting a sense of the flow, and once they have found it, claiming to have originated it themselves. Unlike the beginning teacher who is reeling from shock, these teachers feel safe and secure. Change occurs only after a long period of ascertaining that it is absolutely necessary to keep in step with those around them. For this reason, change is resisted until the direction has indisputably been determined by others and has become accepted as the norm. This teacher’s investment in the present is far greater than any investment in the future, and this is why change is resisted until absolutely necessary, to maintain the respect and continued acceptance of peers. Unknown to this teacher, however, is the perception among peers that he or she is a follower who does little to contribute to the problem-solving and decision-making behavior of the larger group. In a word, this teacher is selfish, clinging to the tried and true that has made his or her teaching easier, rarely venturing forth from a staid routine that after years of practice can be followed mindlessly.

Bill Cook, author of Strategic Planning for America’s Schools (1988), has an interesting analogy that describes those of us who change by following. He recounts what happens to a frog if thrown into a pot of hot water. The result is instant death caused by the shock of the extreme temperature change. Then he describes the behavior of a frog that is placed in a pot of lukewarm water that is gradually heated until hot. As the water becomes hotter and hotter, the frog’s physiology adapts to the increasing temperature and the frog shows no signs of distress. Even as the water reaches the same hot temperature as before, the animal adapts to its unusual environment until the heat becomes so intense that the water boils and the frog dies. The good side of this story is that when the change in the temperature evolved slowly, the change could be absorbed with no discernible ill effects. The frog could adapt to the surrounding conditions. The bad side of the story is that the frog adapted itself to worsening conditions that led to its death.

The point is that change by following may work up to a point, but it has its limits. Those of us that use this strategy sooner or later rely on our skills of adaption in situations where survival depends on new skills, not on the modification of old ones. In an increasingly disordered environment, change by following will surely cause some teachers to adapt themselves into obsolescence. Change by following is a strategy that teaches us to blend
into our environment when it is values that must be changed for us to survive. Many teachers today are adapting themselves to change by looking to those around them and everywhere but to themselves for the ideas they will need to survive and prosper in the classroom. They are unconsciously following the very values that will ensure their obsolescence.

A third way to deal with shorter cycles of value change is to grow. Growth is developing innovative responses, not in anticipation of some impending or ominous event, but to create the future. Growth is creating the future instead of waiting for it, just as Mark created his own triumph on that playground before school. No one brought Mark's triumph to him; he earned it by willingly and enthusiastically listening to his feelings. In this instance his feelings told him to take a journey, and luckily for him, he did. Changing by growing is

• Finding qualified students for a new course you want to teach even though the course isn't scheduled
• Buying out of your own pocket a set of inexpensive paperbacks you want your students to read because the bureaucracy would move too slowly for the books to arrive on time
• Giving students a choice to dispute a wrong answer on a multiple choice test by writing a paragraph justifying their position, for which they may be given partial credit, depending on their reasoning
• Making an exception to one of your own rules when it will exact more obedient or cooperative behavior at another time
• Giving a test you may not have time to grade, to rejuvenate lagging study habits
• Postponing the grading of papers when it's your family and home life that will suffer

These behaviors appear to have no common thread. The truth is that behaviors such as these are so elusive that teachers, effective teachers, learn them only after years of classroom experience. They learn when and when not to go by the book and when they can succeed in making an unconventional response that does not create an equal or more debilitating reaction from students, parents, administrators, and their peers. This is why so little of the real art of teaching is or can be taught outside the classroom. How could a program of training convey all the possible decision rules that must be consulted to determine if a new and different way of responding solves a problem or creates a bigger one? For each of the behaviors cited above, an equal or bigger problem could just as easily have been set in motion. Effective teachers intuitively know when such responses represent the cure or just another problem which must then be handled along with the first one, thus expanding the misery further.
There is, however, a common theme to decisions that are based on growth. As you might expect, they are very different from those decisions based on shock or following. In fact, there is not a single theme but several themes that, if understood, can help you make decisions in the classroom based on growth not on shock or following. These themes are those that guided Mark in his journey to a sense of purpose he did not have before. Now, let's revisit them in the context of your behavior to see where your growth must originate.

Some of the content of traditional teacher training may be criticized on the basis that it may not help teachers to grow and sometimes, albeit unintentionally, thwarts the process. Teaching in the context of some of these programs is a grab-bag of competencies, skills, and proficiencies that are nice to know and sometimes even important to know. However, they may provide facts and skills that can more easily be and often are learned on the job, where their relationship to the real world of schools and the teacher's own survival makes them most receptive to learning and retention. What is most lacking in many formal programs of training is a mechanism for growth that was once so much a part of us as children. Why this mechanism is so important will become clear if we revisit some of Mark's behavior and then see what it can do for us in our classrooms.

Whether in Mark's playground or your classroom, growth will occur if you
• Can be playful
• Know how to find what feels good
• Allow your feelings to speak
• Focus on what you feel
• Narrow your attention
• Quiet your mind
• Let yourself be vulnerable
• Erase the difference between mind and body
• Sense the flow

Now, this is a strange curriculum for teacher training. First, it would be laughed off campus by any self-respecting Dean of Education, and second, it fails to adhere to the mind-body distinction that has become a pillar of academic life. Not only does it not adequately speak to the mind, as would specific competencies, skills, and proficiencies, but it clearly contains much that does not fit in either category. On quite another account, it may also represent vagaries that defy the best efforts of curriculum developers to translate them into a reproducible instructional experience-one that can be equated with credit hours, the interests of professors, and the semester timetable.
On the other hand, growth, the most important ingredient of life, depends on them, and here is why. Bill Cook, in *Strategic Planning for America's Schools* (1988), reminds us that civilization has progressed through several stages. One of the first changes is our shift from nomadic to agricultural society. The goal of agrarian society was to produce food. The emphasis was on land as a resource and natural energy as the agent that transformed seed into the sustenance necessary for life. The stage that followed was the industrial stage of our more recent history. The goal of an industrial society is to transform. The emphasis is on capital as a primary resource and processed energy (oil, gas, steam) as the transforming agent. Now we are living in the age of information. This is the fourth definable stage through which our civilization has passed or is passing. Here, the goal is to provide services, maintain the status quo in the midst of increasing complexity, and, with the aid of computers, organize and reorganize for more efficient functioning. The emphasis of our age of information is on the mind as a primary resource and knowledge as the transforming agent. We have nearly completed this stage and now are on the way to the fifth, and perhaps most important, stage of our civilization.

Historians have noted with apprehension the approximate time spans of each of these stages. The first or nomadic stage lasted for millions of years. The agrarian stage is thought to have begun about 8000 B.C. The beginning of the industrial stage can be traced to the latter part of the eighteenth century. Its role in our history was usurped only about 150 years later with the advent of modern communication systems, data transmission devices, and the computer.

One of the more interesting observations concerning these stages is that each succeeding stage represents only a fraction of the time of the preceding stage. If current estimates are correct, we have already whizzed through most of the information age and now are entering the fifth stage of civilization. The cycle of change is getting shorter, just as cycles of values have been getting shorter. As we have seen, the brevity of a value cycle can turn schools topsy-turvy, making obsolete the huge investments in material resources as well as the skills, competencies, and proficiencies of the teachers, administrators, and students within them. If cycles become still shorter, as most predict they will, we will not be able to train people fast enough to work effectively during the stage before yet another begins. Who among us will be sufficiently trained at the start of a cycle to chart its direction in a manner that is just and fair to all? This may be impossible if the speed of change continues its geometric pace.

These historical events are not separate from the classrooms in which you and I teach. Change is felt at every level of a democratic society, and in as pluralistic a one as ours, change is quickly swept down to the neighborhood school. Computers in schools were not far behind computers.
in offices and homes. Proficiency tests for both students and teachers did not lag far behind proficiency testing of employees in the work force. Management techniques founded in the business world were quickly used in management seminars for school administrators. Classrooms of the future will not be immune from the cultural, technological, and social events occurring in the culture at large. The information age has seen to that. Today, if you are not moving forward with the change, you are moving backward and will quickly lose control of all about you. Some schools and classrooms have already lost control of their own destiny, because within them their administrators and teachers were unable to grow—ill-equipped to handle change or oblivious to it—and were swept aside by an avalanche of events they could no longer control.

We may now be entering another stage with yet a still shorter life cycle. We have yet to find an agreed upon name for this new stage, but some speculate that it may be a stage that makes all future stages irrelevant. Some call this the stage of personal growth. It may not be important what it is called or whether it is really another stage at all. What is important is that it may teach us what the other stages have been unable to because of their relatively long cycles. What this new stage may teach us is a responsiveness to change—or a mechanism for growth—that makes rapid cycles of change in the future of less consequence. Growth can make our responses to change faster. Some believe that such a concept will work in our social and professional lives to counteract and place under our control the previously debilitating effects of rapid change. There is no place in which this concept may be needed more than in our schools and classrooms of the future, where cycles of value change and the competition among value systems are likely to be felt the most strongly.

Growth, as we will define it, is simply the ability to enact thoughtful change. Borrowing a concept from genetic engineering, it means possessing our own molecular assembler. In the future, molecular assemblers will allow scientists to produce products from the inside out, manipulating them atom by atom (Davidson & Rees-Mogg, 1987), thus giving us a system for building things as we like and need them. These molecular assemblers are destined to change our lives in the future.

The long start-up time necessary to plan and prepare for the manufacturing of a product will not be necessary. It will be done almost instantaneously by a molecular assembler. Also, and perhaps more importantly, molecular assemblers will allow almost an endless stream of revisions to the final design to occur in a fraction of the time it now takes to make, test, and then revise a finished product. The molecular assembler will allow for an endless variety of forms and shapes, none of which need be based on or even look like anything currently in existence. How soon all this comes about is open to question, but no one is questioning that it will happen. Few will
deny that 50 or 100 years from now everyday life as we know it, for ill or good, will not look very much like the life we experience today.

There is substantial agreement among scientists that this state of affairs not only will come about but must come about if our civilization is to survive. The reason for their thinking is the result of a pattern that has already made itself clear in relation to every other aspect of our civilization. That pattern is the rapid rate at which change will occur in the future and the incredibly fast responses that will be necessary to control it and form it to our own desires and needs.

There are few teachers who have not had some experience with the scary implications of rapid change in their own classroom. We refer to it as "the class getting out of control," and the scary part of it is how quickly it can happen. Once it happens, every teacher knows how much effort and time it takes to reverse the devastating effects. Also, it is not lost on the experienced teacher that regardless of our efforts to recover from such an incident, things are never quite the same afterwards. What this means is that the future of this class or that lesson is to some degree controlled by a previous, undesired event.

Imagine this cycle happening many times within a single class—a spontaneous event throws the class out of control, the teacher recovers control; another event occurs, precipitated by the first event; the teacher once again regains control; and so on through several more cycles or until the bell rings. Aside from the loss of time, something more significant is happening in this class that may not be obvious to the teacher or an observer. Each subsequent event is influenced by what has gone before, until the chain of events takes this teacher and the class in a direction that was unplanned and unanticipated. The teacher's instructional goals may even become intentionally changed to cope with the preceding events and to prevent greater disturbance in the future. In areas of rapid change, nothing can be fully planned, and events can easily force one to do and to think that which would have been incomprehensible only a short time before.

This lesson will hold true in our schools and classrooms as well. Already we see some inner-city schools posturing to keep up in spite of the social and political turbulence around them. They have an official agenda in the form of a curriculum and state-mandated competencies but only enough energy to give lip service in the midst of the turmoil created by low average daily attendance (50% in some of these schools), the influence of drugs, peer pressure, student dropout, and teacher burnout. Most of the time the teachers are trying simply to keep their heads above water; in the process, the events around them are influencing them more than they are influencing the events. Some beginning teachers flounder for the same reason—a failure to produce an appropriate response in the time needed to break the chain of events that is about to transfer control from the teacher to the class.
Two things will be important in maintaining control of our destiny in the future. The first is to be able to create a response that fits the event to which we wish to respond and the second is to produce this response effortlessly and instantaneously. These are two special conditions that will become more and more difficult to achieve in an environment of rapid change. Most of the training teachers have been given in the past has attempted to teach teachers to achieve these two conditions through the mind. Typically, this meant teaching a menu of responses (e.g., asking higher-order questions, setting performance objectives, developing criterion-referenced tests) to a variety of events (e.g., teaching concepts, remediating deficiencies, teaching for mastery). In other words, academic coursework provided a menu of skills and competencies that could be mixed and matched to predictable events that occurred in classrooms.

Overlearning, often in the form of redundancy between courses, provided the rapidity of responding to fulfill the second condition. This is a training strategy that has worked well for decades and in fact for most of this century. It worked because the events to which the teacher would need to respond were more or less predictable and the time allowed for the response less rigid and more forgiving. Teachers who thought about their lessons the night before did not have to think on their feet the next day.

In some schools today and in most schools tomorrow teachers will no longer have the luxury of planning ahead or using a mix-and-match strategy to accomplish their instructional goals. Events will not only move too quickly for that, but these events will not even look like those in a college textbook, providing no discernable connection between an anticipated event and a learned response. Due to the rapid rate of change and the values that drive it, most of what is taught in formal pedagogical coursework is destined for obsolescence.

Shorter cycles of value change in the future will have an even more devastating effect on the usefulness of much of the formally taught pedagogy of teaching. The effect will produce more variety spontaneously in the classroom than any teacher could control with "canned" responses. This variety comes from nothing less than the increase in heterogeneity in our school-age population that demographers have been predicting for a decade. Not only can we count on shorter value cycles to add to the obsolescence of formally taught pedagogy, but the side-by-side presence of different value systems within the same classroom will further complicate a mix-and-match strategy. In short, a teacher meticulously trained in today’s pedagogy might as well have stepped into a classroom of Martians in the year 2050. There will be precious little that transfers—at least in the form it was taught. In some areas of our country and in some schools this predicament is already upon us.

So how do we train ourselves to cope with and thrive in such a changing environment? It cannot be with the ways of the past.
Growth is a possible answer, but we know so little about growth. Scientists have spent ages watching it occur naturally, but they have only recently had some success in creating it. Growth is the miraculous quality of reproduction, extension, and change. If only we could create it within ourselves and not let fortuitous events control it for us, then perhaps we could direct it as desired and as the conditions in which we find ourselves require. Only then might we be ultimately responsive to the conditions at hand at the moment the response is most effective.

The environment in which we as teachers will find ourselves in the future will create more variety than any list of responses, no matter how well learned, can match. Growth, as we are defining it, is the ability to provide innovative responses to unanticipated events, or, if you prefer, it is the ability to retrieve previously acquired knowledge that has been converted into our own feelings. Only then can it be retrieved naturally and quickly enough to be of use, and only then, through feelings, can it be molded into the size and shape that best fits the condition. Growth is having your own response generator--not one that calls up previously stored knowledge or skills but one that creates from them new knowledge and skills. It is creating, in the tradition of a molecular assembler, a response from the inside out. The response is created from the feeling condition to which a response is necessary, not from a behavioral repertoire from which, under the name of decision-making, a stored response is chosen.

Interestingly enough, teacher educators will recognize this as their goal all along. However, notice that their approach missed the feeling dimension as the vehicle that makes it all work. Subjective feelings do not fit well within the objective trappings of a formal curriculum, so it is no surprise that this ingredient could not be assimilated into modern theories of teaching. After all, we know so little about feelings and how they can be used to form the basis for our creative responses.

Just as we are not ignorant about the growth process and the concept of a molecular assembler, we also are not ignorant about the role of feelings in the decisions we make. Unlike the scientific community's systematic progress in the hard sciences, the study of feelings is not amenable to the college laboratory. Our methods must be different-like observing Mark in his romp around the playground and wondering why such a small boy would drive himself so hard without a tangible reward, have the guts to risk his own safety, and receive so much satisfaction from it all. Our methods may be primitive but this simple observation may have caught something the scientific community would never have found, not the least of which may be the influence of playfulness, feeling, concentration, vulnerability, and flow on our ability to grow and, more importantly, to respond instantaneously to change.

Mark created his own responses that day on the playground. No one taught him how to swing on a swing, jump on the merry-go-round, or climb to the top of the monkey-bars. Yet he acquired from somewhere the ability
to do all these things and then quickly to apply what he learned to the new conditions before him. Mark’s mind surely was important in the process, but we can be sure it was not used on that playground in anything like the way we use our mind to take a test or read a book. This is where Mark's mind and feelings were blended together in a combination that told him what to do at just the right time-without having to think about it. In fact, had Mark stopped to think, he would have ruined the excitement of the moment-like pulling up a rose by its roots to see if it's alive.

Growth is acquiring the ability to do just what Mark did naturally. Since we all walked in footsteps like Mark's in our own childhood, we may not have to learn anything about how to grow. We may simply need to reacquire and perhaps extend that natural affinity for playfulness, feeling, vulnerability, and flow hidden within us. Then we might be able to assemble an infinite number of responses to meet any occasion naturally and spontaneously. We will be at once both sensitive and responsive to the events around us, using our feelings to mediate all that we have learned in life. To accomplish this, forgetting some old mental habits will be as important as acquiring some new ones. You will also need to learn to let go-trust yourself-unblocking and creating a quiet mind with which you will then surprisingly surpass yourself. It is to these important topics we turn in the chapters ahead.
In this chapter we explore the lives of three teachers who, to varying degrees, are learning to cope with rapid cycles of value change. Our three teachers differ as all of us differ-in their ability to adapt to the quick pace of change, to teach and work in a changing environment, and to grow under difficult, sometimes impossible conditions. In the chapters ahead, we will revisit our three teachers at several intervals in their careers to see how they cope, then adapt, and finally grow personally and professionally. We begin by describing the personal and professional context in which each lives and works. In the chapters ahead we will watch how they grow and develop in their own ways and in their own classrooms.

**Angela**

Our first portrait describes Angela, a first-year teacher. Like many first-year teachers, Angela is experiencing her share of distress and anxiety after only a few months in the classroom. Things don't seem as she expected. Besides experiencing difficulties in her personal life, she is experiencing shock-shock that she feels so incapable of doing anything about the disordered environment in which she finds herself. Midway through her first year of teaching, Angela is beginning to harbor thoughts that a teaching career may not be what she wants in life. Let's listen to Angela as she describes her first few months in the classroom.

You've asked me to tell you what my first few months of teaching have been like. Well, I've been wanting to get some things off my chest, so maybe this is the time to do it.

First, you should know that I grew up on the wrong side of the tracks-just like the kids I'm teaching here at Kiesler. My mother is a teacher, and she teaches the same kind of kids in another school nearby. I'm supposed to be good at this-born for it you might say
because I grew up in the inner city, the same one I'm teaching in today, where my mother has taught all her life. I student-taught in an all-white school, but I know how to handle kids-black, white, any color-or at least I thought I did. But I have to tell you my life has been miserable since I got here, and I'm not exactly sure why. I haven't the guts to tell my mother because she's such a good teacher and I don't think she would understand what I'm going through. She'd simply say "Stick with it," "You're doing fine," or even blame me for thinking maybe I can't handle this. I can't take that right now -I don't need another problem.

First of all, I have to tell you my boyfriend just got out of the Army. So, the logical thing to do is get married-or at least start thinking about it. Well, he's still looking for a job and so he's got some extra time. He picks me up from school and he sees me like this-mad, frustrated and not having any confidence. Then we start arguing. He hates it when I'm like this because when we were dating I was always so self-assured, always in charge and on top of things. I made the decisions-where we'd go, what we'd do - and that made everything all right. Now, I'm so exhausted and frazzled at the end of the day that I just stare into space. Whenever he tries to talk to me, I haven't the energy to be myself. He's beginning to see something different in me and wondering why I've changed. So we argue. Now we're not sure if we're right for each other. Deep inside I know we are, but I can't be the person he remembers after teaching a room of fifth graders all day. You see, that's why I'm wondering if I should stay in teaching. Is sacrificing my personal life really worth it? If I thought there was some reward at the end of the tunnel, maybe I wouldn't feel this way.

You asked me to describe some of the things that have happened to make me think maybe I shouldn't be here. Well, I'll give you an example. Last week I assigned an exercise in social studies and told everyone who didn't finish to do it for homework. I usually don't give homework, but this was small, so I didn't think anyone would mind. So Terrence, who never finishes anything, is leaving class without his social studies handout. I go to my desk, get another one, fold it up, and put it in his shirt pocket and say, "Finish it." Well, maybe I was a bit short, but I thought I was doing him a favor. Later, I thought maybe he felt it was some kind of punishment because Terrence and I have never gotten along from Day One. So what does he do-he throws the paper back at me and gives me the finger.

Well, it's not that I'm naive or a goody-goody, so it wasn't all that much of a surprise. I've seen plenty worse. I just calmly told Terrence I'd write him up for detention and he'd have to answer to the principal in the morning. After all, half the class saw it, so I had to do something, and I did. I sent a referral slip to the office before I left school that
described exactly what had happened, expecting all hell to break lose the next morning. Isn't that the way it should be-showing kids who do those things that they can't get away with it?

Well, I got a note the next morning to send Terrence to the office. And then the big bang. Terrence comes back ten minutes later with a note from the counselor that says, "Terrence says he didn't do that." Now I'm about ready to scream, and Terrence sits there with a big grin on his face all day, because he read the note, too. I've been in this school five months, and I'm trying to figure out why the counselor would do that to me-question my word and humiliate me that way. So, do I write back and say, "Yes, he did that," or do I leave it alone? I left it alone-who wants to get in a tug-of-war with an administrator your first year? Then it occurred to me: The counselor knew all the time that Terrence wasn't telling the truth. She was giving me a message-saying don't bother me with such little things; we've got enough big problems to deal with around here. You know, the more I thought about it, she's probably right; there are a lot bigger problems. I could send ten kids a day to her for the same type of thing.

You have to understand what an event like that meant to me as a new teacher-the feeling of loneliness and isolation. I remember once reading something about existentialism-that we're all islands in a world that doesn't care who or what we are. Well, that's how I felt-that my classroom was an island, a thousand miles from land and nobody else cared what happened. Well, I learned something, but the feeling that I'm the one that's going to have to deal with all these kids is scary as hell. Can you imagine the mood I was in when David picked me up?

Kurt

Later in the chapter we will return to Angela to place her portrait in the perspective of our other two teachers. For now, let's turn to our second portrait which describes Kurt, a fourth-year junior high teacher. Unlike Angela, Kurt appears self-assured and confident in his role as a teacher. His life, however, is not entirely trouble-free. After four years of teaching, Kurt is beginning to feel confined by working at a job that may no longer be challenging and for which little additional status or advancement seems possible. He is beginning to sense some discomfort about differences between his highly organized and controlled style of teaching and the techniques of his mostly female peers. In spite of this, Kurt is highly motivated, a firm disciplinarian, and above all pleased that his job is so secure and easy to manage. Let's listen to Kurt as he describes himself near the end of his fourth year of teaching.
You've asked me to describe myself—where I am as a teacher right now. Well, I don't think about my teaching that much; I just do it. It's a job—maybe not a real important one like some of my friends have, but it's a secure job. I know what I'm supposed to do, and I'd like to think I'm pretty good at it.

You probably don't hear comments like this from new teachers, but I've been here for four years, and that's a lot of time. Nothing comes my way that I haven't seen before. I handle it, the good with the bad. For example, I look around this school and I see a lot of floundering on the part of our new teachers. They're moving from one teaching style to another, hoping to find something that works, but our students are smart and they're used to getting their way. That means for a new teacher that students aren't going to like anything you do because when they see you trying something different, they aren't going to respond, just to prove to you it doesn't work. They anticipate your every move and find a way to challenge you. If the kids complain or are having trouble with something, these teachers change to please them. In the end they just get caught in their own trap, because a lot of students will complain about anything.

Well, teaching doesn't work that way—its not like art or drama or being a musician. You don't keep changing and still keep the respect of your students. You have to settle in on what you think will work and then keep getting better at it. You have to focus on the real job of teaching, not just fancy ideas. That means getting organized—preparing lessons, making note cards, getting visuals, and having plenty of handouts and worksheets. This is the grunt work of teaching that doesn't sink in to new teachers until they've been around. Somewhere along the way, all the fancy ideas have to go out the window and be replaced with the basics.

Now I had to learn the hard way, just like some of the new teachers. They come in with all kinds of discipline problems, they're almost always exhausted, and some of their home lives are a wreck because of it. They soon learn that they can't exist at that level for very long. So, the smart ones shed their do-good attitude and settle down to the basics. The good ones get organized so teaching gets easier. They plan ahead, settle in on a routine, and follow an established pattern. That's how you conserve your energy. Then, you stick to it, without asking the students every day, "Did you like what we did yesterday?" "Do you feel you're learning?" "What do you think about this topic?" You seem to have been around in the trenches, so you probably know what I'm talking about. All I'm saying is that the first thing a new teacher needs to do is to find a pattern and stick with it. That way the kids know what to expect and they'll respect you for it, and you won't lose time flitting from one approach to another.
You can tell I'm not like some of the other teachers in this school. I'm sure you've noticed that 80% of this school's faculty is female. I work in a women's environment. That's made me a loner around here. I do my job and 20 minutes later, I'm out of here. I know that there are teachers still in this building at 5:30 some days. They're talking, grading papers, or working together on something. Well, that's all well and good, but that isn't the only way to do it. Settling into a routine and getting more efficient at lesson planning and grading is another way, and sometimes it leaves you a lot better off, more refreshed to face another day. So I guess you know from talking to the others, I don't join in very much. First of all, I'm often the only male, and I don't feel comfortable. Second, my approach is different, and I believe they have to discover it for themselves. There's not much I can do because we have such different philosophies of teaching. I get my ideas from the basics, and they get theirs from one another.

I suppose you should know that I may not be around much longer. I'm thinking of going back to school and getting my administrator's certificate, if I can transfer some credit hours from Florida. Eventually, I'd like to run a school like this. That way my influence would be felt from the top down. Teachers don't like other teachers as bosses. If they change and learn anything, it has to be from someone in authority. That's why I don't do much with the other teachers in this school. I don't think they would be very receptive to a more experienced male teacher telling them what to do. You always need some position of influence before people will listen.

Sheila

Our third portrait describes Sheila, who is in her eleventh year of teaching. After a rough start in an earlier assignment, she has acquired a strategy for coping and teaching that is all her own. Her initial years of teaching in another state were marked by much of the distress and anxiety Angela is facing. After fighting off initial self-doubts about teaching as a career, she caught hold of herself with the help of an inservice program to help her with classroom discipline and management and, in the process, met other teachers who had been through the rough years she was experiencing. This early support group and her years of experience, six of them in her present assignment, have given her a resilient attitude toward much of what she sees around her. Things just don't get to her the way they used to, and when something doesn't go right, she isn't shaken by embarrassment or disappointment. Let's listen to Sheila as she describes herself in the middle of her eleventh year of teaching.
It seems funny to be writing and thinking back like this. It's something I should have done long ago but never had the chance. I started out teaching in another state, and a lot less happy than I am now. It wasn't an easy beginning for me. I got a divorce after only three years of marriage, and while I was trying to cope with a new job, my personal life was falling apart. Those first few years were the hardest I ever had to live through. I started out with such silly notions about teaching—that I was a born teacher, that all my students would love me, and that teaching was a job that had nothing to do with my personal life.

I remember coming home to John those first few years like I had been lifting cement bags all day. I was sweaty, with my hair all stringy, and too tired to cook or keep house. That wasn't the way John wanted to see me, or remembered me when we were dating at the U. of W. I was too close to my job to see what was going on at home. By nature I'm a timid person and I had lots of trouble using my authority to control my classes. I thought the kids would behave just because I was the teacher. Well, that doesn't work. You need more than the trappings of authority—you need the commitment of your students to want to learn. I couldn't punish them for misbehaving—that wasn't my nature—and I couldn't get their respect either. Things were awful and that's what I brought home every night—exhaustion, humiliation, and frustration at not being able to be good at what I thought I could do best: teach. John and I grew further apart until my frustration at not being able to be what he wanted ate away at our relationship. I wouldn't say we parted because of my frustrations with work, because there were other things, but I can't help but feel it made things worse.

Well, that's water over the dam because I'm happily married now and have two children, and I'm lot smarter about my relationship between work and marriage. I know how to keep them separate.

One of the things that really helped was an inservice I attended in Milwaukee. At first I considered it a form of punishment from my principal because I hadn't been doing well. But that wasn't really true, and the most important benefit was meeting teachers like myself, many of whom were having the same problems I was having. What was so nice is that there were some really experienced teachers who taught me some things I would have never learned on my own. I would listen to them talk about their own lives as teachers—what kept them going and made teaching exciting and interesting for them.

That's when it really hit me—it's not how much you know but how you see things that counts the most. I kept coming to the sessions to learn new methods and hear all about the latest resources for English teachers, but what I got is what I needed even more—friendship and support from others who had been through it all. This meant more to
Three Teacher Portraits

me than anything else. What was interesting was that many of the problems I would describe in my classroom were also happening in theirs—even in the classrooms of the experienced teachers. I keep remembering one teacher in particular who worked in one of Milwaukee’s problem schools. She would tell us how we had to grow beyond looking to be saved by some new technique or method and to look to ourselves and the support of others for the resources to cope with the problems in our classrooms. Oddly enough, that was what the inservice was supposed to be all about—new techniques and methods—but it quickly became a kind of school of hard knocks for all of us, since so much time was spent in discussing our own problems and sharing ideas.

One of the things I remember that changed me the most was when another teacher described how resourceful we could be if we’d just look to ourselves for the strength we needed to see us through. You could tell she’d been around. She said we had to find our own personal reason for teaching—and I remember this was the hard part to swallow—or get out! She was very insistent about that, because she said, and some of the others agreed, that nothing was going to happen in our classrooms unless we made it happen.

You see, this was just what I needed to hear, because being a new teacher, I thought I was getting a bad rap, and that someone or something was supposed to save me, that someone owed me something to make my day easier. And when it didn’t come, I started blaming people—first my principal, then my husband, and finally myself for being in such a mess. Well, as I recall there were a couple of messages that Martha—that was her name—was trying to tell us. One was that my classroom was not unique and even veteran teachers like her faced many of my same problems every day. Another was that teaching was never going to give me back what I gave it if all I wanted from it was just what the system could provide—a paycheck and some security. In other words, my reason for teaching had to be something more than a paycheck, a responsible job, and the privilege of being a teacher. Those things would never sustain me over the long haul. I needed to find some purpose for teaching that was greater than presenting course material—something that represented my uniqueness as a person that might not be shared in the same way by any other teacher. Once I discovered my own purpose for teaching, a lot of the problems I was having could be turned into opportunities.

At the time those were just words to me, but as things played out in my classroom I found a certain wisdom in them. For one thing, I stopped thinking of myself as lacking the skills I needed to control my classroom. I searched through many different reasons I was a teacher and threw away some I didn’t really believe myself. The few that
remained seemed to strike me as the real reasons I became a teacher and didn't quit when I was having so much trouble. I just never consciously thought about them before, so they got buried with a lot of other things I was forcing myself to believe. Now my real reasons were conscious and out in the open. That's when some of my discipline problems actually gave me the opportunity to become a better teacher. These problems just became opportunities to learn how to manage a classroom better.

To tell you the truth, if things always were to go right in my classroom I'd be bored stiff. Problems aren't the ego-crushing events they used to be. Today, I have the strength to respond to problems because I know inside I have an answer-some answer-that can make the problem go away. Before, I didn't believe that many of the problems I was having had a solution-or, if they did, it was in some book I hadn't read or somebody's advice I forgot to take. Now, I feel capable of making up my own solutions, even if one doesn't exist somewhere in a book. I stopped looking for the right answers and started creating my own. Quite frankly, I don't think about what's supposed to be the right or wrong thing to do any more-if it seems appropriate I pull it out of my hat and try it. If that doesn't work, I go back into my hat and pull another one out-that's how I teach. Don't ask me to explain how it works. All I know is that it started when I discovered the real reason I wanted to be a teacher.

Reflections

To help us understand who each of our three teachers is, how they see themselves, and how each must change and grow in the chapters ahead, let's explore some of the currents set in motion thus far.

Angela

As with many new teachers, Angela is experiencing shock-amazement that things don't happen the way they should or the way she was led to expect by her training and experience. Angela will soon decide whether to turn up her numbness amplifier to blot out the disorder around her or to respond in the fashion of Sheila-turning to herself for the answers she needs. You can bet that Angela will receive many more shocks from the system, but how she deals with the shocks will decide for her whether or not she stays in teaching. If she turns up her numbness amplifier, as many do to survive
amidst conflicting values, teaching will soon become monotonous and dull. Angela may survive, but feeling and experiencing only a portion of life around her. At a young age she will have blotted out both good and bad and, experiencing neither, will stop growing.

To cope with shock and to grow, Angela will need help—from her administrators, fellow teachers, and loved ones. They too are responsible for Angela in helping her find a purpose for teaching or, finding none, redirecting her life in more meaningful ways. You can bet there are some hard choices to be made ahead, not only for Angela but for her principal who must maintain an effective school, her peers who must decide how to support and help her, and loved ones who must care for and understand her. For now, we leave Angela in the first stage of growth—with a concern for her own survival, in which her primary goal is to get through the day with the least intrusion into her delicate emotions and fragile state of mind.

**Kurt**

Although both Kurt and Angela are struggling, they are struggling in different ways. Angela appears overwhelmed by shocks from the system, whereas Kurt, at least on the surface, appears to have acquired a pattern that cushions or eliminates any shocks that might come his way. In other words, he organizes himself and his job so completely that it would be difficult for anything out of the ordinary to occur in his classroom. Kurt has done physically what Angela may do emotionally—blotting out any incursions into his security and well-being.

There are, in this respect, some parallels between Angela and Kurt. While Angela is groping with how to deal with the realities of classroom life, Kurt is learning how to control reality. Notice that beneath these two different approaches, both Angela and Kurt are reacting to the stresses and strains they feel by isolating themselves from life around them. Angela may become numb to the unsettling events that surround her, in order to protect herself. Kurt, on the other hand, may have chosen to isolate himself in another way. Instead of becoming numb to unsettling events that threaten his sense of values, Kurt appears to be organizing the teaching task so rigidly that questions to his value system are not likely to occur. One might guess that as Kurt becomes more efficient in presenting his subject, fewer of his students may be committed to learning the content he so efficiently and methodically presents. Kurt, too, may be protecting his emotions and a state of mind that may be no less fragile than Angela’s. In the chapters ahead, we will see how Kurt intends to deal with greater and more frequent intrusions into his organized and secure style of teaching.
Sheila

Sheila brings still another dimension to our teacher portraits. She is older, appears more mature, and expresses herself more readily and openly than either Angela and Kurt. Like both Angela and Kurt, she too has had some rough times, especially during her initial years of teaching. The truth may be that she is still having rough times, but Sheila seems to take problems in stride, and as she says, can turn them into opportunities. We learn that her outlook on life did not come easily. It took the same kind of shocks from the system that Angela is experiencing to wake Sheila up to the fact that she would have to change and change quickly if she was to survive her own self-doubts about becoming a teacher. Lucky for Sheila, some emotional support and advice appeared at just the time she needed it.

Many teachers are not as fortunate as Sheila, to find help from others who are willing to share their insights. Notice how Kurt avoided other teachers, although it was apparent that he believed he had something worthwhile to share. The difference between Kurt and Martha, the experienced teacher from whom Sheila gained her early advice, was the manner in which Kurt felt he had to convey his message: as a boss. Martha's message to Sheila was as a peer who once had the same problems Sheila was experiencing. Oddly enough, Kurt felt his advice would not be accepted as a teacher, but it would be if he were an administrator. The truth may be that his top-down approach would probably fail him in both roles as teacher and administrator. We learn from Sheila that influences upon our behavior—lasting influences—rarely come from "on high" but rather from those with whom we work every day. Peers, especially experienced peers, are often the most salient influence on the lives of teachers. Fortunately for Sheila, her opportunity to meet peers in the context of a meaningful dialogue came in the form of an inservice program.

Recall that it was Sheila's willingness to reach out at her inservice, to find solutions in the experiences of others, that turned her teaching around. Reaching beyond ourselves for the advice and strength we need to survive in today's hectic classrooms is an important sign of growth. It is a sign that you are willing to accept the complexity and disorder around you and to search for solutions that convert disorder to opportunity.

How did Sheila do this? Although we will return to Sheila in later chapters, Sheila found a purpose for teaching that was all her own. She no longer needed to march to the beat of someone else's drum—she found one of her own. This became the start of an ability not to follow the responses of others but to create responses that others might follow. She found the energy to create her own responses of any size and shape that would fit the events occurring around her. Every problem had a solution—from within herself—that did not have to depend on her ability to remember or to have
been taught the right answer. This provided Sheila with a flexibility of response that is not shared by Angela or Kurt at this point in their careers. We will see shortly how Sheila acquired this ability; she is learning to respond much as did Mark on the playground that first day of school. While Angela is learning to cope with change by becoming numb to the unsettling events around her and Kurt by creating an efficient and secure classroom routine, Sheila is learning to cope with change by growing-changing herself in response to the needs and events around her.

We will return to the professional lives of Angela, Kurt, and Sheila. For now, let's turn to some concepts each can use in their respective journeys toward growth.
CHAPTER FIVE

The Power of Purpose

Growth is that marvelous quality by which living organisms change. Over the course of our lives, we store within us many of the experiences from which growth springs. This inner self—the source from which all growth comes—can be experienced by every human being. The only difficulty is that some of us aren’t very good at looking within ourselves to access it.

To appreciate this we need only look to the animal kingdom; there a dog must remain a dog, nothing more, nothing less; a snake a snake; an ant an ant, without the possibility of growing or changing into anything else. Yet surprisingly, we often treat ourselves as if we too were of the animal kingdom, locking ourselves into categories we did not create and over which we mistakenly believe we have no control. It is as though we come to believe we were born into a certain state, and for ill or good, it is there and only there we must remain.

This becomes apparent when we examine how teachers view their job. When questioned about their life’s work, a few will say that for them teaching is just a job. These teachers often remark that they could easily have chosen another profession but circumstances, mostly out of their control, happened to set them on a course toward teaching. If events had not pushed them at that crucial time in their life, they might have become a salesperson, office manager, newspaper reporter, engineer, or some other occupation with which they might have been equally happy.

Another, somewhat larger set of teachers, thinks of teaching as not just a job but as a secure job. These teachers are quick to point out that they can count on a stable source of income with which to raise their families and contribute to the household earnings without the competitiveness, changing conditions of the marketplace, and possible layoffs or transfers that so commonly occur in the business world. Some of these teachers point also to the generous vacation time, especially during the summer, which allows them to be with their families.

A third set of teachers views teaching as not just a secure job but as an important job. They refer to its apparent status in comparison to some
other occupations and the independence that is afforded them within their own classrooms. This they point to as the mark of a true profession that has bestowed upon them a demanding task that requires judgment and skill. This group is also large in number, like the previous one that sees teaching as a secure form of employment.

A final, albeit relatively small, group views teaching as not simply a secure job or an important job but as a purposeful job. What this group reveals that is lacking in the others is a sense of teaching as a source of fulfillment within themselves. They not only see teaching as being an important job that is secure, but they put their own personal spin on their commitment and that makes their job meaningful to them. This commitment is contributory to but may have little intentionally to do with the formally stated goals of education. In other words, they have a private purpose for being there, as surely as do some overworked nurses, underpaid secretaries, or busy sales clerks whose sense of personal satisfaction and fulfillment from their job makes their commitment possible.

Although there are limits to the low pay and difficult working conditions anyone will endure in the name of personal fulfillment, this last group of teachers has found, at least for the moment, an acceptable level of satisfaction for the hard work and frustration they encounter. They have, in a sense, set their own rules and balanced the equation with something within themselves. This is not to say that these teachers do not work for and vigorously support the call for better working conditions, but they are realistic enough to know that, as contradictory as it may be, in the immediate future teachers will not be rewarded at a level comparable to other professionals with equal responsibility. So what do they do? They find a purpose or reason for teaching that is greater than the task of presenting content, grading, and managing the classroom. It may have been long in coming, but they have found a purpose that supersedes the daily routine of teaching. In this chapter we will explore the meaning and power that lie in having a purpose and indicate how you can find yours.

The diagram on page 55 summarizes these four perceptions of teaching. Complete the activity below to learn which perception of teaching is most typical of you.

**Perceptions of Teaching**

*Put a check mark only beside the boxes that you think most apply to you.*

1. Eventually I’d like to move on to another profession.
2. I’m thankful I have a job in teaching.
3. I’m glad to be a teacher, even if not everyone respects me for it.
4. The future success of my students pretty much lies in my hands.
5. I'm trapped and have nowhere to go.
6. I'm glad not to have to be looking for a new job right now.
7. I have so much work to do in my classroom that I'll have to work harder to accomplish it all.
8. Very few could do as good a job with my students as I do.
9. I'm bored and need some new challenges.
10. The pay ain't great, but things could be a lot worse.
11. Somebody's got to teach our kids, so it might as well be someone as conscientious as I am.
12. My hard work eventually makes a difference in the lives of students.
13. My job is about as good as any other that pays the same.
14. I can pretty much do what I want, because they'd have a hard time getting rid of me.
15. The public really knows how important teachers are.
16. Some students will succeed or fail in life because of what I teach them.
17. Teaching is not what I'd really prefer to be doing right now.
18. I'm into a nice routine that I'd hate to change.
19. Teachers are probably one of the most influential forces in determining the future of our society.

20. Things may not always go smoothly, but every day I make progress toward giving my students what they need.

Each item above indicates a tendency to see teaching as (a) just a job, (b) a secure job, (c) an important job, or (d) a purposeful job. The 20 items have been arranged so that every fourth item starts a new sequence of items arranged in the (a)-(d) order above. For example, items 1, 5, 9, 13, and 17 represent category (a); items 2, 6, 10, 14, and 18, category (b); and so on. To find where you stand, count one point for each check mark for the items representing each of the four categories. The higher your score in a category (the maximum is 5), the more you tend to be associated with that category. If your score is highest in category (d), you are in the minority of teachers who have completed this form. Typically, a teacher's highest score will fall in category (b) or (c), indicating that most teachers tend to see their job as secure or important but not necessarily purposeful.

The power of having a purpose is that it can focus our consciousness on things we never before could see or appreciate. Many practicing professionals today lack purpose— at least the kind that is generated from within as opposed to that forced upon them by their job or boss. The result is almost always a lack of stamina and commitment to go the distance before boredom, burnout, or incompetence prevails. Researchers have found that in the business world expense accounts, company cars, window offices, and even high salaries cannot account for the variation in the productivity of successful executives, because the constant demands, quotas, and frustrations of the job always outweigh any "perks" they may receive. They may cushion the pain, but not a single interview with a leading executive (McCall, Lombardo & Morrison, 1988) pointed to "perks" as a reason successful businessmen work so hard. On the contrary, these individuals were shown to be indefatigable workers under the harshest, most competitive conditions because they had a purpose for working that was more important than the job itself.

This also explains the behavior of some teachers, especially those who consider themselves having not just a secure and important job but a purposeful one. Think about why some of the teachers around you teach and you will discover that not all are teaching for income—they could have other jobs. Not all are teaching for security—their families and loved ones would still give them that. Not all are teaching to feel important—they already know they are, and some could get another job to prove it. Then why are they submitting themselves to one of the most difficult jobs imaginable if they could find higher paid and more pleasant employment elsewhere? While some are attracted to or are afraid to leave the teaching profession for pragmatic
reasons, others are in it for their own good. These teachers have discovered deep within themselves a reason for who they are and where they are going. They have discovered within themselves a reason for being—call it their own empire—that goes far beyond the physical bounds of the school and classroom in which they work. To be sure, theirs is a silent empire that only they know and over which only they are master. But within it are all the ingredients they need for personal fulfillment and satisfaction. Most important, it is a job that allows them to grow in countless ways. Let's examine what might comprise some of these silent empires that can be built with purpose and from which some teachers discover a profound sense of who they are.

As elsewhere in life, there can be good and bad purposes. Some purposes can serve us well in our journey toward growth, and others can lead us astray. First it should be said that finding a purpose is nothing short, in difficulty and agony, of searching for your very soul. It shouldn't be all that difficult, but unfortunately what we are looking for has been buried under tons of cliches, educational jargon, and stuffy textbooks. From all of this "hype," formal pedagogy, and inservice sermons (which most teachers could deliver themselves) we learn someone else's purpose but little of finding one of our own. Amid all the fanfare, we soon stop looking within ourselves for purpose, since someone is supposedly being paid to give us that. In short, we stop even considering the possibility that the real reason we are teachers can only be known to us, and the techniques needed to fulfill our purpose can only be discovered by us. The ancient Greeks were right in teaching their young that true learning cannot be communicated; it only can be discovered. So the reason our search for purpose may be so difficult is not that we don't have one buried within us, but that we've been taught to look for it elsewhere—in textbooks, lectures, and the experiences of others.

The purpose we are looking for, and that you must find, begins with a personal statement of what it is about teaching that you, not others, believe in. I have found that writing such a personal statement is difficult, since most of the purposes written are nothing more than vague and undifferentiated cliches heard elsewhere. These statements usually convey the expected party line; once stated or written, they fail to invoke the commitment required to carry them out. They die of their own dead weight—like the behavioral objectives you were going to write or your promise to grade papers last night. Some cliches that often masquerade as personal statements of purpose are

• To impart knowledge
• To create an environment for growth
• To foster well-being
• To maximize student potential
• To enhance student understanding
Although these are phrases with which every teacher would agree, they are slogans and cliches spoken in the well-worn language of education. In short, they are "wimp" phrases that do not spark personal meaning within most teachers, nor can they be accomplished in any reasonable amount of time, since most are dependent on many factors outside your classroom. Good purposes, on the other hand, are specific and personally meaningful. They represent your own bedrock convictions-things you'd never compromise. They are deep, abiding convictions that may have been buried within you for most of your adult life without your knowing it. They affect why you value some things and not others, without ever being conscious of their influence. They avoid cliches like "maximum potential" and fluffy words like "enhance" and "foster," the true meanings of which may never be known. For example, if you grew up in a neighborhood where you felt racial or religious prejudice, you might have a special understanding of its effects and how to overcome them. If you're concerned about the rapid pace of science and technology, you might have a deep respect for the danger as well as the potential of science. If your parents or grandparents came from another country, you may have a special understanding of how some forms of government have limited the human rights we take for granted. If you came from a family that encouraged a strong sense of cooperation and sharing, you may now be realizing the benefits of these characteristics in your own life. These are the types of things that may have been buried within you for a long time without your knowing it. Yet they are an important part of you-a part that shouldn't be hidden in your classroom.

Now here are some real purposes.

• To teach my social studies class the effects of prejudice and how to overcome it
• To teach my science class a respect for the potential as well as the danger of science
• To teach my history class how governments can impose limits as well as create opportunities
• To teach during reading that each of us must sometimes take the responsibility for sharing our thoughts and feelings with others

Notice that each of these statements differs from those on the first list, in that they can only be meaningful within the context of the experience, values, and interests of the individuals who wrote them. One can almost imagine that something unique has gone on in the lives of the authors of each of these statements that made him or her care about what was written. No curriculum guide could dictate these statements in the exact manner they were written, yet each would fit in any curriculum guide.

That's why purposes don't change the content you're teaching, but
rather the spirit and motivation for how it's presented. They are ways in which you express through the curriculum who you really are-the things you believe in that can make your teaching and your classroom special. They are not lists of objectives; they are not even a guide to what you will teach on any given day. They are just one more reason you get up in the morning and want to come to your classroom. Although they may not motivate you every day of the school year, they bring a personal, albeit silent, touch to your classroom that may be unrecognizable to anyone but you. They are your personal reasons for why teaching is special to you. Your list of purposes can include many such personal statements within and across subject matter or be unrelated to any particular subject.

Genuine statements of purpose get written only after considerable soul-searching that turns up those special values in which you most deeply believe. They must not be only nice things that educators somewhere expect teachers to do, but what you must do if you are to have pride in your work. Things you care about, remember as important from your own experience in school, learned from your own family while growing up, experienced or failed to experience in your adult life, and that you believe should be shared with others, make excellent personal statements of purpose. Now, try making a list of your own.

Take a few minutes to write below eight purposes that, if implemented in your classroom, would give you a personal sense of accomplishment. Put them in words that make sense to you and that represent your values, deepest most feelings and/or personal experiences that you think others should acquire in the course of learning your subject and becoming a mature and responsible adult. Avoid vague language and wimpy words.

*Statements of Purpose*

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.
As any great athlete, business executive, or head of state knows, having a purpose is necessary but never sufficient. Most purposes and the commitment with which they are conveyed, if not backed by more than words, however awe-inspiring and captivating, will never see the light of day. Repentant alcoholics, drug abusers, and criminal defendants all know the powerlessness of words-entries in a dictionary that can be used and misused as one's desires dictate. Personal statements of purpose are the beginning of our journey and can help us to survive the harshest of conditions with grace and balance. They are not, however, sufficient for building our own silent empire or for making it useful in our daily lives. What is it, then, that must follow the words, that can make us activate our written statements of purpose? It is to this important topic we turn next.
CHAPTER SIX

Finding the Person Inside

Breaking through your self-imposed limitations is the essence of becoming not only an effective teacher but a satisfied and fulfilled teacher. As Chapter 2 revealed, the task may well seem impossible amid the growing disorder that seems to be commonplace in education today. However, nothing could be further from the truth, as many authors have given testimony, from the ancient Greeks to Joseph Campbell. The only problem is that the information we need has infrequently appeared in any single source and has never been applied to teachers. So if readers feel something is new or original in the ideas that follow, they can rest assured that many have quietly benefited from them for ages and have become effective and fulfilled individuals as a result. We can only chastise these beneficiaries for not broadcasting their wisdom to others. Who are these individuals? They represent many of our best teachers, mail carriers, physicians, carpenters, legislators, and bus drivers. They are none other than those people we meet in all walks of life who amaze us with their excitement for life, commitment to a purpose, and, as a result, competence in an occupation or profession. How they do it, under some of the most adverse conditions imaginable, we now will examine.

First, let's recall several ideas that have led up to this chapter. Previously, we examined Mark's playground experience (Chapter 1), the increasingly disordered environment in which teachers work (Chapter 2), and some notions about growth (Chapter 3). What these themes have in common is that solutions to your problems will never come from the world around you, which you have been taught to rely on for most of your physical and psychological needs.

In Chapter 1, we caught a glimpse of Mark seemingly operating as any young child would on the first day of school, but driven by emotions and feelings that only he could provide. His mother, teacher, and school were unable to give Mark the feelings he experienced that morning. Mark's silent
empire gave him his success experience with little aid from the outside world even before what for him must have seemed insurmountable odds.

In Chapter 2, you might have felt as if the world-your world was coming to an end as some of your worst fears about the status of education in America today were confirmed. Here the aims and purposes of education, so often pictured in lifeless tones in education textbooks, were seen convoluted and distorted through rapidly changing value cycles, change dictated by the real world and real people in which and with whom schools must operate. Due to these cycles of value change, a once-placid educational environment was revealed as increasingly disordered, unlikely ever to return to an earlier, slower, more forgiving state.

In Chapter 3, we discovered how personal growth could become a mechanism for living in and actually prospering from an increasingly disordered environment. The problem is, however, that we know so little about growth-personal growth-and that all of life's experiences seem to militate against personal growth, from the way we organize our institutions to the way we are trained for a job and life's responsibilities.

In Chapter 4, three teacher portraits revealed various stages of growth. Through Angela, Kurt, and Sheila, we saw how our outlook on life can actually control our thoughts and actions, in as well as out of the classroom. There we found growth an elusive quality that is discovered by some and not others, depending on whether their focus is primarily on self, the teaching task, or their impact on students.

Chapter 5, we learned that personal growth is an inner not an outer phenomenon, despite what some want to sell us to help in the process or teach us about their lives, their experiences, and their empires. Also, we learned that personal growth-that commodity that can help us not only to live but to prosper in a disordered environment-begins with purpose, those deepest, innermost convictions you have been developing within you since your earliest childhood years, without always being conscious of what they were. You were asked to bring the subconscious to the surface in the form of some personal statements of purpose that delve inside yourself for an answer you have previously sought from without. We will now place some of the themes in these chapters into a plan for growth that will cut the bonds that may have been limiting your personal growth and teaching effectiveness for most of your professional life.

Any plan for growth must be simple and practical and, of course, effective. Much of what has driven and determined the effectiveness of individuals for ages must necessarily be put in terms understandable to those of us who have neither the time nor the patience to find the technical underpinnings of personal growth, as written about in academic books and journals. One never gets a whole or coherent picture from these sources, as though the authors have discovered something so simple and effective that they fear
if left in its simple state, no one would believe them. So they wrap it in
technical jargon and embellish it with theory to make it acceptable to their
academic colleagues. Instead of abstracting the essence of what they found,
they choose to microanalyze it to death until incomprehensible to normal
human beings who must every day live and work in the disordered environ-
ment in which the concepts could be put to use. The following is the essence of
what practical experience and volumes of academic work tell us about
personal growth—and how to attain it.

Our plan for personal growth will be to break the bonds of our self-
imposed but often unconscious limitations. Our plan has only four simple
components consisting of concepts about which you already know a con-
siderable amount. These four components are

• Playfulness
• Concentration
• Flow
• Affect

To be sure, we will have to replay more than four words to convey the power
of this set of ideas. Let's begin with the first of our components.

Playfulness

form of expression used in the Japanese culture, called *play language*. Play
language refers to a gaiety of expression that represents even the most mun-
dane of tasks as play. For example, Campbell observes that when visitors
come to Japan they are often greeted with the phrase, "I see that you are
playing at being in Tokyo," not the more expected, "I see that you have come
to Tokyo." The idea behind play language is that the person using it is in such
control of his or her life that for that person everything is play, or a game of
sorts, unconstrained by the normal boundaries of thought. The speaker is
playing life as though it were a game, free and easy. Those who use such
language are rarely accused of not being serious about those things that
should be taken seriously. Rather, what has to be done is attacked with such
will and conviction that in fulfilling their purpose they are playing—having
fun while doing life's work. This is reminiscent of Mark's behavior on the
playground, which was at once both serious and playful. For Mark the goal of
climbing to the top was serious—not a time for silly mistakes or inattentiveness—yet Mark would be described by an observer as being at play. The play that is
the most fun is also the hardest, most complicated, and even dangerous. A
walk around the block would not have given Mark
the same sense of accomplishment as did his ascents to the top of the monkey-bars. That walk would have been too easy to instill the sense of freedom and personal meaning that Mark was seeking.

We often envy musicians and artists, and sometimes other professionals like ourselves, for their playfulness in the context of accomplishing difficult tasks. Even jealousy is an emotion not unknown to us when we see some individuals seemingly enjoying—or playing—at what for us is serious, difficult, and thoroughly exhausting work. How often have we envied someone, perhaps even a close friend, who not only accomplished a task better than we but did so as though at play, without the perspiration, fear of failure, and pain we have become accustomed to in performing the same task.

It is interesting to analyze how we often respond to this seemingly incongruous behavior of others. Our conclusion almost always is that this person either was lucky to have accomplished the task in such a whimsical, playful manner or that he or she is so much more gifted, intelligent, or talented than we that there is no necessity to adhere to the methodical rules that we feel certain must guide our lives. Rarely, if ever, does the thought occur to us that this person completed the task with grace and balance, not in spite of playfulness but because of it. Nothing will dissuade us from believing that the accomplishment was due to luck or an unusual gift that we will never possess. It is as though these brave souls had a destiny to succeed and needed only to play out their preordained role of making life look easy—and us foolish.

What is revealed by the Japanese play language and our own observations of whimsicalness in the context of accomplishment is that play, in its fullest and most powerful form, is a state of mind. That is why the play we are discussing is not what many think of as play. As we will deal with it here, play involves a mindset that removes the psychological bounds by which most of our behavior is governed, without removing the responsibility for our actions. This appears to be a rather fine line, and so some explanation is in order.

As it turns out, play language and the state of mind it represents are complicated. This, in part, is why so few of us ever are truly playful in our adult lives. Playfulness, as we are using the term, can only be accomplished by understanding two strong and often contradictory parts of ourselves. Tim Gallwey, in The Inner Game of Tennis (1988), calls these two competing senses of self Self 1 and Self 2. We must look at our own experience and Gallwey's insight to discover how these two senses of self operate.

Much of what we fail to do or to accomplish is the result of interference between Self 1 and Self 2. Self 1 is our conscious ego mind. It's the part of you that you use when you are consciously thinking, remembering facts, trying to solve a problem, or judging the accuracy of things, just as school children would do if they tried to figure out if they had done things well enough to
get a good grade from the teacher. Since we all have egos, Self 1 is constantly working to see if our performance measures up to what others expect. Self 1's judgments are based not only on the criteria of performance taught to us in school, but also on standards that are accumulated throughout life as to what others might expect (family, friends, employers). One might think of Self 1 as our thinking self or schoolhouse self, although we use this part of us in almost every conceivable context, some far removed from the academic world.

Self 2 is quite a different sort of fellow. Self 2 represents our unconscious body mind as opposed to the conscious ego mind. Practically, what this means is that Self 2 represents our performing self as opposed to our thinking self. Strangely enough, it is often the least influential but most powerful side of us. It is the least influential in that it is frequently controlled by Self 1, and it is the most powerful in that it does all the work. This lopsided arrangement is one of the reasons we see so little playfulness in our adult lives.

Self 1 and Self 2 are actively involved in everything we do, Self 1 as the guru that tells us what to do and Self 2 as the obedient servant that carries it all out according to plan. The interesting thing about this arrangement, however, is that it is taught to us at an early age, and rarely do we question the utility of it or try to operate under any other arrangement. Self 2 becomes comfortable in asking for instructions from Self 1, and Self 1 is more than happy to provide them. If all this weren't going on in the privacy of one's mind, it might rightly be labeled a form of slavery. Instead, we submit to it because of the widely held belief in the predominance of mind over matter. Now let's explore some of the pitfalls of this arrangement as it affects our performance.

The mind is a wonderful and complicated instrument. Unfortunately, it is not sufficient to get us through the tangle of decision-making settings in which most people find themselves on a daily basis. It has been estimated, for example, that teachers on the average have over 1000 interchanges of substance each day, many of which require split-second decisions (Clark and Peterson, 1986). In each of these, Self 1 must recall from learned knowledge or acquired experience how to respond and then instruct Self 2 to act. The problem is that Self 1 instinctively searches for a response, any response, and passes it along to Self 2, whether or not Self 1 recognizes the context in which the response is required. Of course, many contexts are not like any that have been confronted in the past and so the message given to Self 2 may be off the mark—resulting in a response that may be a near miss but a bit crude and inappropriate for the context in which it is given.

I have often observed the effect of Self 1 in directing the actions of student teachers. They are confronted with an unexpected decision, they know they must respond, so Self 1 goes to work, rapidly sorting through years of formal learning and acquired experience with similar problems. Self 1 finds
the best match possible and gives the command to Self 2 for execution, all in a matter of seconds. In the few seconds Self 1 is searching, a sense of panic comes over the student. Then, having come up with an idea of what to do, the decision is executed by Self 2 and the student is noticeably relieved that this situation is over. What the student does not notice, however, is that he or she was capable of a better or more graceful response that was more attuned to the situation and, in fact, had given that response before when the situation was not as tense and demanding. In other words, had this new teacher not tried so hard, the response that was needed would have come naturally without the interference of Self 1. Self 1, representing our conscious ego mind, had to act by providing a response from stored knowledge, but in the end could only pass on an academic or manufactured response designed to fit many such situations and therefore fitting no one situation. It is as though all the pages ever read relevant to the problem at hand and all the experience acquired were consulted in a flash by Self 1 and the response closest to but not necessarily fitting the context was passed on for execution by Self 2. The result often is not a bad response, but neither is it a response having the grace and balance of which the individual is capable.

There is one other sad result of this interchange between Self 1 and Self 2. If such an interchange were called for only occasionally, one might never notice that an individual was capable of something better, of exceeding past performance. However, in the hectic stream of decisions in most people's lives, Self 1 soon becomes exhausted by looking for textbook solutions that match the context. Then the matches between situations and responses get sloppier, fitting the situation less and less until fatigue and then exhaustion set in and the teacher becomes noticeably overwhelmed by the pace of events and dissatisfied with her or his inability to keep up with a myriad of decisions that must be made. Ultimately, Self 1, in fast-paced and hectic classrooms, spews out so many solutions that it serves only as a distraction to Self 2. At that point, chaos may prevail or the teacher may slow the decision-making by invoking rigid control to avoid having to make any decisions at all.

There is, however, another scenario, infrequently enacted. Occasionally, the new teacher becomes aware of the distracting influence of Self 1 and shuts down its influence on Self 2. At that point the teacher makes a conscious decision to change from a thinking self to a feeling self. In other words, this teacher stops looking for the right thing to say or do, convinced perhaps that there is no right answer, and proceeds to respond from the heart. Few ever make such a decision, but for those who do the results are often spectacular- and it is then we fully see the deleterious influence of Self 1 on our ability to surpass ourselves. What occurs at this point is what star athletes and performers do instinctively. They use Self 1 to learn the rules of the game or the musical notes, but once those are learned, they listen
only to their performing self. No time to conjure up what the coach or teacher said—events are moving too fast for that. Now they must rely on instincts and feelings that may have been influenced by Self 1 in the past, but, if they are truly successful performers, the effects of Self 1 have been absorbed into their affect long before. Now an affective buffer lies between Self 1 and Self 2, and that is directing their actions and is in command of the show. This is how some individuals are able to give frequent superior performances, while others achieve only mediocrity most of their lives. Some never want to leave the safe confines of Self 1 and the comfort of knowing that it will always have an answer—some answer—for what to do. Thus, with Self 1 directing our actions we rarely feel vulnerable because of not having a recognizable response at our disposal, even if it is not our best response. On the other hand, disregarding Self 1 leaves us feeling terribly alone and vulnerable to criticism and failure. Therefore, casting aside Self 1 in favor of the affective buffer is not a choice most of us make.

One of the reasons we resist our natural instincts is our fear of divorcing thinking from action. This is a connection that has been reinforced from our earliest years. To avoid the connection of Self 1 directing the actions of Self 2 would mean to unlearn mental habits that for most adults have become deeply ingrained in the psyche. However, doing that is precisely where growth begins. Leaving the familiar past and creating something new is what growth is all about, whether it is taking place in the animal kingdom, the flower garden, or your classroom. In each of these settings something is being extended and built upon—not in the form of an exact replica, but with a new dynamism, color, personality, or response that never existed in that exact way before. How to create this form of growth in your person and classroom will be the focus of this and the chapters that lie ahead.

The first step to growth is understanding the important role of playfulness. Recall that being at play is not the same as being playful. The former engages one in goal-less activity and the latter represents a state of mind for goal achievement. I can be playful while thinking about teaching—or, as the Japanese would say, I can play at teaching—but that does not mean teaching is play. Playfulness—or a playful state of mind—is important to growth because it helps us undo the strong and unremitting effects of Self 1, while not denying its role in creating our affective buffer from which Self 2 will derive a new and different set of instructions. Without playfulness you will never find the ingredients with which to grow. These can not be the same mental constructs used in the past, since then the product would look like those of the past—with no signs of growth. Growth requires newness, a change that may be based on the past but is different from it.

From where does growth come? It comes from the context in which we are able to be playful. What is this context? It is the disordered environment in which teaching is increasingly taking place. Why is a disordered
environment so important to growth? It is because there a playful mind will find the rich mix of ingredients that is sufficiently different from the past to allow—even encourage—growth to occur. Playfulness in a totally predictable environment could not support growth, since there would be nothing with which to play. It would be a fixed, nailed-down, immovable environment not conducive to a nimble state of mind. In a context of rapid cycles of value change, there is much less rigidity, with a resulting flexibility to think, act, and perform in unprecedented ways that can create growth. A playful state of mind that bypasses our conscious ego self is therefore the first step to achieving growth.

Concentration

A second step requires concentration. This step may at first appear the opposite of our first. First, you may say, I am being told to be playful and then to do the opposite. But recall Mark's adventure in Chapter 1. Mark was both full of play and focused. He appeared to have no goal but pursued his playfulness with resolve to achieve something, although that something was not preconceived nor could it be just anything.

Mark was concentrating on what felt good and natural. He knew his stress point: where pleasure stops and tension and pain begin. Because he was aware of these feelings, his behavior could not be aimless. Some things were more in focus than others, some probably not even noticed, and some were where Mark knew he could go, given a little time and courage. Concentration is what most of us lack, especially in time of need, such as rapid-fire decision-making requiring unanticipated responses in front of a class of combative learners. The reason most of us lack concentration is not because we don't have the will, but because we are so distracted time and again by ourselves. We often wrongly attribute these distractions to our environment—pester students in the back row making trouble, noises from across the hall, previous responses still ringing in our ears. The truth is that, although these sources can represent real impediments to our concentration and ability to perform, they are not nearly as disruptive as the thoughts coming from within our own heads.

What are these thoughts, and where do they come from? They are none other than Self 1 wanting to take control, curtailing or eliminating any nonstandard thoughts and feelings that might take a playful form. Your concentration is broken by Self 1 who wishes to remain in control with previously acquired knowledge, interfering with Self 2 who wants to respond by creating a new response. Self 2 instead sits and waits for an answer, subduing any instincts to act playfully, without the assistance of Self 1. What if Self 1 does not offer just one response but conjures up a menu to choose from? This is
what we commonly see as hesitation-in which the teacher is taking the time to decide whether to do this or that, without realizing that the moment has passed for any response to be effective.

There is another side to this break in concentration from Self 1. Self 1, as it is our conscious ego mind, likes to take control of things. It can take control, however, only with knowledge acquired from formal schooling and acquired experiences. It cannot act instinctively and most assuredly cannot be playful. This is in contradiction to Self 2, which has only instinct and feelings with which to operate. Along with Self 1’s need to control comes its most damaging aspect. Not only does Self 1 tell Self 2 how to respond; it judgmentally observes how well the action is carried out. This is perhaps the most frequent reason for a break in concentration. Self 1 is saying, "Don't trust yourself, do what I say, and when its all over I'll let you know whether it was a good or bad performance." That may sound like a pretty important role for Self 1-a kind of personal feedback we can use to improve our performance. Unfortunately, Self 2, who must carry out the action, knows that Self 1 is observing and carries out the action with a fear of failing to please Self 1. Why does Self 2 respond this way? Because it has experienced failure before and naturally assumes it can occur again.

What fear of failure does to our concentration is a most interesting phenomenon. Fear of failure is why some athletes undergo something like hypnosis before critical engagements, to ensure that negative thoughts or doubts about their powers do not creep in before the big game or fight. To allow that would be to break their concentration and create the self-fulfilling prophecy that was feared in the first place. Although professional athletes have long ago discovered the disabling effects of negative inner thoughts, teachers rarely think about such things and prefer not to risk playfulness, choosing instead the repetitive patterns of behavior served up by Self 1. When failure occurs they attribute it to their ineptness, not to their lack of concentration caused by a fear of failing. This is an important distinction that never becomes fully untangled in the mind of some teachers. Did I fail because I don't have the skill, or was I, for some reason, unable to show the skill that I do have? Oddly enough, most beginning teachers will choose the former explanation, never realizing the destructive and disabling influence their own fears have played in their failure. This negative self-talk tends to grow louder and louder until the teacher banishes any risk-taking behavior from his or her repertoire. The teacher becomes overly organized, rigid in his or her patterns, rarely changes lessons, resists anything new, and always goes by the book and by the rules. This is not a picture of growth, yet scores of teachers in every school fit the picture well.

What we see is the devastating effect of a hidden self-evaluative character that can be every bit as cruel, if not more so, as an external observer’s scorecard. The net effect may be even more damaging, as we tend
to hear ourselves more often than any outside observer. The result is a turning up of our numbness amplifier to a point that we are unwilling to become vulnerable by risking any playful behavior, and this precludes any form of personal growth.

What is so disabling about Self 1's judgmental quality? Judgments about our performance are after all a highly sought-after quality, for which some pay handsomely. Every human being can benefit from feedback; it's the evaluative or judgmental quality about it that is destructive to our performance. Unfortunately, Self 1's feedback is always judgmental unless we train it to be otherwise. I believe it has not occurred to many that feedback without judgment is possible. Since these two are inextricably linked, it is difficult to imagine one without the other. However, successful professionals have separated the two, at least in their thoughts. Not to disengage the two would lead to an endless stream of negative self-talk that would make concentration at times of high stress nearly impossible. Can Self 1 be taught to provide feedback like a neutral umpire, observing the closeness of the ball to the plate but really not caring if it is a ball, strike, or hit? The truth is that successful people do this all the time. It is how they improve their performance enough to be considered successful by others without filling their heads with evaluative thoughts that break their concentration and make them miss the mark. Non-judgmental observation is letting go of the process of correcting faults and letting the observation itself do the correcting. Your job is to observe your own performance accurately, after which the facts of your observation become your own best compliments.

How does one separate judgment from feedback? The answer may be surprising. We usually seek out and even sometimes supply ourselves with positive thoughts, but the answer does not lie where you might expect-by heaping positive thoughts upon our naturally occurring negative ones. This is a mistake often made by ego-inflating seminars for business executives, which may provide little more than a motivational speaker. What some who foot the bill for such seminars have come to realize is that hyped-up motivation unconnected with personal behavior does not last. Worst of all, it often has the effect of implanting more self-doubt than before, by providing a picture of a model salesperson, executive-or teacher-who can never really exist. What some have not realized is that positive images of oneself can just as easily lead to a negative image, since the exact opposite is easily discernable from contrast with the positive case. In other words, where there is positive there must be negative, the outline of which is amply clear, even accompanying a positive and upbeat picture of self.

The point is simply that non-judgmental observation avoids both positive and negative judgments and instead involves only the observed facts. The body takes care of the rest, as the techniques of many of our best coaches will testify. Their role is to teach the player to be a good observer of his or
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Letting go of the judgment process and learning to trust yourself is not part of any teacher training or inservice program. On the contrary, the theme is antithetical to much of the content and method that is taught under those auspices. They are attempting to supply Self 1 with more and more content that can be matched with a growing and endless list of decisions. The only problem is that the list of decisions supplied by our rapid cycles of value change is increasing geometrically and our list of skills, techniques, and methods grows at a snail's pace. Many of these programs have missed the point: that in today's hectic classrooms, no amount of skills, competencies, or proficiencies will ever be sufficient to match the rapid decision-making settings that today's teachers, especially beginning teachers, are facing. What is missing is how to convert what is taught in these forums into feelings, placed within an affective buffer from which new responses can be created. To build your own affective buffer, in addition to playfulness and concentration, you need two more ingredients.

Flow

We saw in the previous section the deep and unremitting effects of self-doubt on our actions. We noted that concentration—true concentration that eradicates self-doubt—can only come as a result of shifting the way we see our own behavior. That shift entailed seeing that evaluations of our performance are not attributes of the event itself but value judgments that are added to the event after it has occurred. This means that few of the actions we perform in the classroom are really right or wrong—they simply acquire this status in our minds as a result of our judgment of them. External observers...
may place judgments on our action, but we must learn not to do so and instead to see our actions as they are, with nothing added. For most of us, this would be to change a mental habit acquired over most of our lives. We are always looking for approval of one kind or another and hence, spend more time quietly judging our own behavior than observing what that behavior would actually look like if we could see ourselves in a mirror. In other words, most of us are lousy observers-or feelers-of our own behavior, since our minds are usually filled with distracting self-doubts at the very moment an action is being performed.

Breaking this mental habit and observing your own actions non-judgmentally—as a detached umpire or accomplished coach—is a topic we will return to in the pages ahead. We cannot escape from the fact that such a task will require altering some long-held mental habits. However, it is just such perceptual shifts that result in real changes of the kind that textbooks, inservice lecturers and coursework can rarely accomplish.

The glue that relates playfulness and concentration is flow. Flow makes these two steps meaningful by setting them in motion toward some discernable goal. Simply put, flow is letting things happen, as opposed to making yourself do something to make things happen. To let things just happen, however, will not be useful unless you are in a playful state of mind that has been purged of all self-doubt: In other words, a state of mind that is at once vulnerable and non-judgmental. Notice the implausibility of this state of mind for most of the situations in which we find ourselves. To be vulnerable is to be fearful we will be subdued, made fun of, or fall on our faces, which is, of course, why most reasonable adults avoid being playful. To be non-judgmental would be to ignore those who might be watching, including Self 1, the most vigilant observer of them all. The apparent dangers of such a state of mind are not lost on many fighting to maintain status and respect in an unforgiving adult world. The result is that we steer clear of such a state as much as we can, and unknowingly lose the opportunity to better our performance in that very adult world in which we wish to surpass ourselves.

What makes flow so important—and what is it? Flow, for those who acquire it, makes the drudgery of classroom life fun by bringing play and work together. Work without flow can be a form of torture. In fact, "work" and "play" have been put into a false dichotomy that has unfortunately driven our lives for ages. However, it has not been a dichotomy that has existed forever. If one cares to think about it, few outlets for play were available in many prehistoric cultures. Weekends did not exist in prehistoric times, nor did the cinema, snowmobile, tennis court, television, or motorboat—all instruments of play in modern culture. There were no means of separating enjoyment of life from the hard work it took to sustain it. So playful work was the order of the day. To these people, what was playful work?
Few scholars have denied that ancient cultures enjoyed life even under the most difficult of circumstances. Everything we know about these cultures seems to support this notion—from the paintings of life’s events on cave walls, to the way they approached hunting and the celebrations of life and death that many of these paintings represent. In other words, work and play often flowed together and would, even by today’s standards of fun, be indistinguishable, should an anthropologist go back in time to observe. In fact, I will go further to speculate that in the course of their life’s work these cultures were able to eke out more fun than many of us are able to do on a holiday weekend. The reason for this is that enjoyment—what I have called fun—was not synonymous with pleasure.

I am often surprised at reading lists that appear in the press as to the most desirable cities in America in which to live. The implication is that if we could afford to move and somehow find gainful employment in some top-rated place, we would be foolish not to pack the U-Haul and set out for a life of fun and excitement, leaving our dreary existence behind. The surprise comes as the article reveals the basis upon which the author determined his ratings of the top 50 or so cities in which to live. Included and often predominantly weighted among them are patterns of consumption such as number of boats owned, public tennis courts, private swimming pools, and two-car garages, which tell us nothing about whether the people who use these things enjoy their lives. Even when criteria turn to such desirable characteristics as climate and lack of pollution and crime, they still confuse pleasure with enjoyment, as many who live in the most statistically unfavorable places in America will attest. These statistics tell us nothing about how many of the inhabitants are starved for the experience of flow—for the opportunity of bringing meaning to their jobs by blending work and play. Such comparative statistics among places tell us nothing about one of the most important ingredients of life—flow, which brings play and work together.

The essence of flow is not to become combative with our environment but to seek harmonious participation in it. Those who have it become partners with the forces that impinge upon their lives, rather than combating those sometimes divisive forces. Those who experience flow do not seek to control—or necessarily even to change—their environment, but rather devote their energies to participating in the events and currents of life occurring around them. Participation in one’s environment can happen—and does happen—in all sorts of places, which may or may not be favored in the statistics of consumption.

Flow means manipulating your state of awareness, not your geography, just as ancient civilizations had to do in the absence of published standard of living indexes and affordable U-Hauls. They were stuck, as it were, with the drudgery of staying alive in a not always pleasant environment, not unlike
many classroom teachers of today. So how did they do it—work to stay alive and enjoy doing it?

The first thing they did, and one of the most important ingredients of flow, is to let it happen. That is, they let life happen, without complaining about getting a raw deal for having been dumped on earth at a place where it rains only two months of the year and man-eating lions are roaming about. Fortunately, they probably had nothing with which to compare their physical environment and so had to turn inward for the energy-physical and emotional-needed to sustain life: no moves to the affluent suburbs were in sight. In other words, they concentrated their attention and withheld judgments. Something bad could become useful for good, since only what existed was brought into their consciousness. Imagine the importance in an early culture of changing from a mindset that was fearful of predatory animals, such as cave bears, to one that saw them as a source of food and clothing. Before long they used such animals to hone their skills, celebrate the hunt with song and dance, and to preserve the enjoyment by painting murals of the event on cave walls for future generations.

As crises emerge, as they can be expected to do in an increasingly disordered environment, they can be turned to opportunity, providing we are in the right state of mind. Today we may have lost the hard-won ability of our ancestors to turn danger into opportunity, to see the many crises we are facing today in terms of both problem and potential. The Chinese have a interesting way of expressing this contradiction. In their language the word for "crisis" is expressed as two symbols, one expressing "danger" and the other "opportunity." Thus, a crisis is a dangerous opportunity. The problem in responding to the many dangerous opportunities all around us today is that we look to Self 1—our thinking side—for all the answers, and have not learned how to access our feeling self from which responses can also be generated. Our forebears had to be ready constantly for the unexpected and, in order to survive, provide a response that might never before have existed—not unlike the beginning teacher in today's classroom.

To say we have no ability to respond to crisis and therefore to opportunity today would not be accurate, as there is much evidence to the contrary. What we are describing here is the ability to merge work and play into a commodity called flow, even when the work may be difficult and perhaps dangerous. While some today may have lost this ability, preferring to confuse enjoyment with pleasure, enough have not to give us some hope and direction. Some have experienced flow under the most dismal conditions—an ignored composer, frustrated author, prisoner in a concentration camp, scientist working against the grain—and are testimony to how some people have managed to not only survive but to grow in the harshest of environments. The world is full of examples of people who have no objective reason to
enjoy what they’re doing, yet they do so. In other words, there are plenty of examples of situations every day in which crisis is turned to opportunity by what we have defined as flow.

Up to this point we have described what flow is, but not how you can attain it. Much of this book will be devoted to how to obtain flow in your classroom. The process begins by:

• Establishing clear goals-having a purpose and a commitment
• Becoming aware but not judgmental of your own behavior
• Limiting the stimulus field-focusing on some things and ignoring others
• Separating your sense of self from your sense of accomplishment

Flow comes from having a private empire that is generated by the activities you pursue in attaining your personal statement of purpose. That purpose-or set of purposes-is what necessarily must limit your stimulus field-that broad cacophony playing a tune of disharmony in your classroom with the many discordant value systems that will be operating. Your sense of purpose may be all that holds you together in a disordered environment over which you have little or no control. To feel competent and in control and to have a sense of harmony and union with your surroundings is what any human being needs to survive.

Therefore, out of purpose come the activities that make flow possible. These are not just any activities but are ones that provide opportunities for actions that match your purpose, limiting the perceptual field and excluding less-relevant stimuli. These activities are the means for reaching, but perhaps never completely attaining, your purpose. With flow activities, everyday life can be made more rewarding, overriding the dreary reality and chance events that at times rule every classroom. Most important, if selected carefully, flow activities have the power to create new forms of responding previously unknown in your classroom. To introduce you to the idea of flow, read the following examples of some of my own flow activities and then in the spaces provided, create a list of your own.

Flow Activities

To the left is a list of the ten things I like to do best in life-spend the most time doing, talk the most about, think and dream about often. To the right, indicate some of your own flow activities that make life more enjoyable for you.

My List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Go to the movies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Camp out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Read mysteries
4. Shop for clothes
5. Eat out
6. Go horseback riding
7. Travel
8. Garden
9. Attend live musical performances
10. Meet informally with friends

The key to flow is selecting activities that focus your attention on your personal statements of purpose. That is why developing realistic statements of purpose in Chapter 5 was so important. If your purposes are not your own bedrock convictions of what should be made right about schools, they will not provide the flow activities needed for you to carry them out. The nice thing about personal statements of purpose that are realistic and personally meaningful is that the flow activities needed to carry them out tend to develop from within yourself, without requiring inservice programs or formal coursework before you feel competent to try something new. In other words, the human body and mind can provide the right response at the right time, without consulting Self 1 or any other resource, if they want something badly enough. Think about how some of us have learned to ride a bike, play golf or tennis, drive a car, or even walk. In many cases there was no formal instruction, we simply taught ourself, amid sometimes unfavorable conditions, because we wanted to learn badly enough. I have never witnessed anyone successfully teaching a child to walk, yet thousands learn this complex behavior daily. If the child does not want to walk—does not feel ready—he or she does not learn to walk. No one could ever teach me to play the piano for the same reason—it simply was not on my list of purposes. So one of the nice things about having a purpose is that the body trusts itself to respond from feeling or affect unhampered by cognition. To be sure, cognition-our thinking self-plays a role in every action we take, but the actions we are talking about—flow activities—are found within our affective buffer and do not come from schoolhouse learning or even acquired experience.

Return to the flow activities you listed previously and identify how some of them might be incorporated into the purposes you listed at the end of Chapter 5. Read the following examples and then in the space provided indicate how some of your own flow activities could be helpful in fulfilling one or more of your purposes. Be selective about the flow activities you choose and add new ones, if necessary to match a stated purpose.
Relating Flow Activities to Purposes

Identify below some of the ways in which your flow activities could be used to fulfill some of the purposes you listed in Chapter 5. Use the examples below to get you started.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flow Activities</th>
<th>Related to a Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Camp out</td>
<td>Have students share their personal experiences with nature during a discussion of the works of Henry David Thoreau to teach that literature is the communication of experience. (In American Literature class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Go to the movies</td>
<td>Have students recall recent movies in which instruments of technology were displayed to teach a respect for the danger as well as potential of science. Ask students to comment on the accuracy of the portrayals and what lessons were or were not learned. (In Physical Science class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Garden</td>
<td>Have every student contribute something growing to a classroom garden to teach respect for the forces that promote and hinder life, both plant and human. (In fifth grade)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.
Our final step in achieving growth requires the use of feelings. Our affective buffer, in which is stored much of life's experience, translates thinking into feelings. We need only conjure up a picture of any successful performer at a critical moment - 80 yard touchdown, hole in one, violin concerto, impassioned speech - to confirm that feelings, not thoughts, were primarily responsible for the quality of the performance. In fact, as we have seen earlier, had thoughts - the thinking self - been there exclusively at the time, the quality of the performance most assuredly would have been diminished. These individuals, after the hard work of acquiring the knowledge and experience that made the performance possible, translated them into affective images that held the key to their successful performance.

The form of a response within the affective buffer is different from the form in which most responses are stored within the mind. Two popular ways of storing information are committing it to memory in the form of verbal text or creating a picture or visual image of the information. When needed, we recall the words through synaptic impulses, or the picture through what is commonly referred to as imagining. These are two of the favorite devices of Self 1. Their limitation is that what comes out must be closely tied, although by no means identical, with what went in. Thus, a sort of matching process goes on, wherein the situation at hand is rapidly matched with information, in the form of knowledge, skill, or competency that may be useful for responding in a decision-making setting. This is where the overused analogy of the brain as computer originates. As with a computer, vast amounts of information is scanned in a flash and some formula for a successful response is completed and handed out to our performing self for execution.

Unfortunately, neither the brain nor computers of the future will be able to act in this fashion for adequate problem solving in an increasingly disordered environment in which rapid value cycles will bombard the decision maker with an endless array of situations that will fit fewer of the facts, skills, or competencies capable of being recalled by either synaptic impulses or visual imaging. In the impending era of change there will be too much variety and too little response time to use the brain as it has been used for centuries. Our pattern of decision making must evolve, just as our global environment is evolving. That means we must create new responses that do not fit the old molds we use in today's decision-making settings. Teaching, among many other professions, will no longer fit the traditional molds with which it has been described and illustrated for the better part of this century. The concept of a new mold of any form, size, or shape will be as irrelevant as the old ones, since "mold" implies shape, and the shape of your responses in the future cannot be predictable - by you, your immediate supervisor, or your principal. Your classroom behavior must be responsive to every situation, without having any mold to aid your decision making.
So from where will your responses come? They will come from affect images—or what many informally describe as feelings. Not just any feelings, but feelings that can release unique and creative responses. In the biological sciences the means by which these images or feelings are released are called innate releasing mechanisms or IRMs for short. In the human sciences they have been variously referred to as the "feeling tone" (Jung, 1977), "primordial image" (Burckhardt, cited in Campbell, 1971), and "feelimage" (Gallwey, 1988), to describe an inborn mode of acting. Affect images represent instincts from which new growth springs of our own design—a design dictated by the situation before us, not the textbooks and lectures behind us. It was affect images that drove Mark's behavior on the playground that first day of school—not synaptic impulses that helped him recall directions for climbing the monkey-bars or pictures of successful climbing procedures conveyed to him through books. These sources might have been useful at some time, but they were not consulted by Mark at the time of his climb. Feelings were dictating Mark's behavior, and for each new feeling Mark provided just the right response until a gentle interplay between feeling and response was underway. This led to a rapid and effective flow of decisions, aided by Mark's willingness to trust in himself.

It is important to note that affect images are not visual images. They are feeling images that take any shape or size, depending on impediments to their flow. No image is ever exactly like any other. The image created is formed on demand by the forces at hand—in classroom, concert stage, or football field. Within our affective buffers we release the energy to create affect images of any size and shape necessary. Unlike traditional ways of teaching and learning, however, the response—or image—is allowed to be shaped by the event; the event is not created by the response. In other words, the teacher's response to the stimulus field does not do combat with or alter the environment but harmoniously participates with it. This is a most unusual way of thinking about teaching, one that will be absolutely essential in the years ahead if teachers are to perform effectively in the midst of rapid cycles of value change.

A feeling or affect image also was at the heart of Mark's responses, just as it should be at the heart of your classroom behavior. Innate releasing mechanisms provided Mark with the affect images that gave him the right response at the right time. Until now, they have been the least understood and least controllable aspect of our decision making. How do these innate releasing mechanisms give us the right response at the right time?

IRMs don't really give us the response that may be needed. If that were the case, they would be indistinguishable from the inner workings of Self 1, which, as we know, provides us with more or less canned responses accompanied by judgmental observation of how well responses were carried out. IRMs, instead of giving us a response, provide energy or the commitment necessary to form a response independent of all other learned responses.
Although much about IRMs is unknown, some scientists believe that they unleash instinct-or common sense, if you wish-that is programmed into the human species. Since much of how to release this energy is still a mystery and, therefore is seldom taught, we can readily see why so little common sense-or instinctive behavior-can be seen in the world today. Self 1 always seems to get in the way with some answer that doesn't quite fit the situation. Instinctive behavior is, however, often seen in the animal kingdom, where built-in survival mechanisms direct much of the behavior we see.

Joseph Campbell, in his book *Myths To Live by*, recounts having seen a Disney nature film that illustrated this very point by showing a sea turtle laying her eggs in the sand. Out of the sand came a bunch of tiny newborn turtles. Without hesitation the tiny ones turned instinctively toward the sea, where waves were lapping that must have looked immense to them. Somehow the little turtles knew that the correct direction was toward the sea, even if the human audience did not. Then it became apparent why: a flock of screaming seagulls zoomed in to attack the turtles, picked them off one by one if they were caught out in the open. Now it became clear that the water was their only salvation. No training or experience had been necessary-every one of the tiny creatures knew without being told where it had to go in order to survive. Their innate releasing mechanisms told them what to do in a situation they had never before encountered. Mothers of newborn infants have the same instincts, and so do we all.

To help recognize your own innate releasing mechanism, recount a major event or incident in which you had to respond without time to think. Use the personal experience below to guide your responses, and then complete an example of your own in the space provided.

**Recalling My Innate Releasing Mechanism**

1. Briefly describe the event.

   I was supposed to give an brief after-dinner talk to a group who belong to a professional association with which I was affiliated. Since the invitation had been extended months earlier by phone in the rush of a busy day, I had forgotten to make a note of it on my calendar. Only by chance did I show up for the dinner, a friend talked me into it with the idea that it would save us the cost of another meal in an expensive hotel. I was shocked to hear my presentation announced at the end of dessert and I could only guess what I was supposed to discuss.

2. Did you have time to stop and think?

   It took two or three minutes to introduce me, during which time I was so upset I couldn't hear what was being said. I remember taking a gulp of water to disguise my fright. I tried to think about what I would say, but absolutely nothing came into my head.
3. Why did you decide to respond?
I felt it would be better to say something than to admit my embarrassment at forgetting my commitment, but I must admit I had my doubts.

4. What did you do?
Since I wasn't prepared to talk, I searched for any ideas that felt comfortable. I remember starting a few sentences by trying to remember something I had written that I thought would be relevant. Realizing the awkwardness of it, I stopped in midstream and started in a direction that seemed to pop into my head, prompted only by my feelings and a sense of hopelessness.

5. What was the outcome?
Once I stopped looking for some ideal message and began listening to my feelings, the words just came without my really thinking much about them. My friend said afterward he thought I was just kidding and that I had planned to attend the dinner all the time. His observation was my best compliment.

Now, recall a major event or incident of your own in which you had to respond without time to think. Then answer the following questions.

Recalling Your Innate Releasing Mechanism

1. Briefly describe the event.
2. Did you have time to stop and think?
3. Why did you decide to respond?
4. What did you do?
5. What was the outcome?
Successful athletes, performers, top salespersons—and effective teachers—all use affect images to direct the most critical behaviors they must perform. How do they use affect images? They first train themselves to be acutely aware of their own feelings—what feels right and what doesn’t, just as Mark did on the playground. That much is instinctive; we know when enjoyment stops and pain or awkwardness begins. Second, they concentrate on the enjoyment resulting from the affective image or feeling. In other words, they concentrate to close the separation between feeling and action and to become aware but not judgmental of their own behavior. Finally, they separate a sense of self from a sense of accomplishment. That is, they are committed to the process and not the reward. In this sense they slip out of mind, unaffected by the pressure to achieve or need to look good.
Teacher Portraits: One Year Later

In this chapter we return to Angela, Kurt, and Sheila one year later. At the end of our last visit we left Angela deciding whether she would return for another year, Kurt starting to work on his administrator's certificate, and Sheila learning how to adjust her teaching to the problems and opportunities around her. Let's look in on their lives once again to see how each is growing personally and professionally.

Angela

I've been doing a lot of thinking about why I decided to return after all I went through last year. I haven't decided that teaching is for me yet - I just don't know what else to do with my life at this time. Besides, it would hurt my mother to learn that I didn't want to be a teacher. So, to answer your question, I guess I'm teaching because I can't face up to telling my mother I'm not like her. Maybe if I had an offer for some high-paying job, she might understand, but I don't have one.

This year things seem to be going better. What's helped is getting ahead of the kids-being able to plan a day or two in advance. Last year, I'd figure out what I was going to do 20 minutes before school. I was just too busy even to think about tomorrow, let alone next week. This year, I'm actually spending a little time after school planning where we should be. Last year the kids controlled everything - I mean, if we didn't finish a unit, then we didn't finish it. I was too scared to change things-like teach the hard things over again if they didn't learn or use a demonstration or discussion to get a point across. Instead, I would spend most of the time in seatwork except for reading-just to keep the class under control. Now I feel I can be more daring, even though
I'm still frightened whenever I try something new—which isn't all that often.

It still bothers me whenever I get into a situation that I can't control-like group discussions or a cooperative learning activity. When the noise level goes up, I can almost see Mrs. Garber in the next room staring at the walls and wondering, "What's she up to now?" I never hear a peep out of her kids, so when mine start making a commotion I start to worry what the other teachers on the floor are thinking. That's why I stick to seatwork as much as I do. That way, I can control the class.

That may not be what you want to hear, but I'm overwhelmed with all the problem kids in here. If I started dealing with them on a one-to-one basis, I'd be swallowed up. These are not your run-of-the-mill kids. Many don't have regular families—they live with only one parent or parents who don't care how well they do in school. You should see some of their reading levels—they can't read enough to complete assignments in the workbook and there aren't enough remedial books to go around. So what do I do? I teach the kids who can learn and hope that the others don't create such a fuss I can't teach at all. Now, you see why I stay with seatwork-things are more predictable that way.

Besides, when things don't go right, I blame myself. I've watched my mother handle kids like these for 20 years and I can't help but compare myself to her. When I do, I look incompetent, or sometimes I even think I'm being lazy for not working harder on nifty little lesson plans-like when I was a student teacher and had only two subjects to teach to a bunch of eager beavers. Here, things are just too overwhelming for me to start getting creative. I'm probably the most traditional teacher in this school. I let the workbooks do the talking, just to keep everything together. That's a difference from last year, when I was run ragged caring for every kid—and then finding I couldn't, and expecting help from others. So I learned the hard way that teachers have to take care of themselves.

Now you see why I can't pay attention to all the problems in my classroom. I know some kids are going to end up the year about where they started out, regardless of what I do. Maybe I'm not the teacher my mother expects, but I'm surviving.

I keep thinking that I must be lacking something my mother and a lot of other teachers have to deal with classrooms like mine. My mother's always telling me about some kid she taught to read when no one else could, or how some of the most troublesome kids she had are now grown-up and successful. Last year a policeman stopped to give me a ticket and recognized the name on my license. He asked if I had a mother that taught at Langley. He said she was the best teacher he'd ever had to say hello. That had to be eight or ten years ago, and
this guy still remembers my mother. "Wow," I said to myself, "what a teacher, my mother." I can't imagine that ever happening to me. She takes a problem kid and makes him into a policeman. Problem kids get me so frightened I can't think straight. I'm afraid if I don't do the right thing, I'll make them worse, so I shut them out and concentrate on the others.

That happened last week with Raymond. He sits in my class, playing with marbles in his pockets all day. It's only October, but I already know this kid can't read or write at a fifth grade level. My guess is he's two or maybe three grade levels behind in every subject. I asked that he be removed from my class because he can't do any of the work. Well, you'd need an act of God to send him back a grade, and, besides, he passed fourth. So I started combing the school for fourth-grade readers. I figure my job is to help him read, as long as I'm going to be stuck with him for a year. I think, "What would my methods instructor do?" "What would the cooperating teacher I had during student teaching do?" "What would a textbook say?" Well, I don't know, although, I just know they would have handled it like my mother. The problem is, I must have been dense or something, because I can't figure out what to do with Raymond-how to get him interested in school and to get him to read with some newfangled method everybody else must be using to reach kids like this. Maybe I didn't learn everything I was supposed to, which makes me wonder how I will handle all the other problems around here that are a lot worse than Raymond? Now you see why I teach to those who can learn.

I asked Mrs. Luffler what to do with Raymond, since she had him last year. She told me Raymond is always going to be a special case because he doesn't learn like other kids. "He's experience-oriented and visually dominant," she said. Now, I thought to myself, why didn't I know that? You see the feeling of isolation and loneliness I get-just me and all these problems to deal with. Where do I find what I need to survive in a place like this?

Kurt

This year is about the same as last. I can't really say much has changed-for better or worse. After talking to you last time, I got serious about what it would take to move up to administration. Well, it's going to be harder than I thought, because most of my graduate hours aren't going to count. So I decided to bite the bullet and start from scratch, but I can tell you it's going to be rough-going to school at night for I'm not sure how long. I can tell already the strain it's
going to put on the family. Sometimes Carol thinks it's a good idea, but at
other times, I'm not so sure. Last week I left school late and called her to pick
up Cindy, our little girl, because I have class on Tuesdays and Thursdays. As
it turned out, it was just as inconvenient for her as it was for me.

I started to try some of the things you talked about last spring. At first I
thought I might like doing some cooperative learning, but as things turned
out, I really didn't have the time. In thinking back, it might not have been so
much the time as much as that it didn't fit my style of teaching. I see some of
the other teachers trying to pick up on these ideas, but the way they run their
classes is different. First of all, they haven't settled into a routine yet, so
they're groping for things to try. I've been around longer and I know what
works for my classes. Let's face it, cooperative learning in a math class can
waste a lot of valuable time and it isn't going to make someone like math any
better if they don't like it in the first place.

The consumer math class I teach is just that way. More than half that class
hates walking in the door. I see it in their faces. You can't tell me fun and
games is all of a sudden going to wake these kids up and make them love me
or math. So instead I create an orderly environment. Everybody knows what's
going to happen. First, we go over the homework; then I introduce the new
work; then I solve problems like the ones they'll see on the homework; if
time's left, I assign some seatwork. This makes our lives a lot simpler than
getting involved in group work or discussion.

It's not as though I'm lecturing all the time. Sometimes I ask where they're
having trouble and we work through additional problems, but you need to
know these kids don't have high verbal skills-they can't really express
themselves. When I ask them to tell me what problems they're having on the
homework, they don't know or they'll use the opportunity to get me off track.
That's the difference experience makes--knowing when and when not to do
something. Getting students to talk may be OK in social studies or English,
but it doesn't work in math. The point I'm making is when ideas come from
students, they aren't going to match what I'm suppose to be teaching, so I
don't use techniques that bring up things that get me off track. In math you
have to be careful that what you're teaching is relevant. That's why I really
haven't tried much of what you talked about. I felt you were really talking to
the other teachers.

This isn't to say I don't have problems, but I handle them differently than
a lot of the younger teachers. I'll give you an example from my eighth grade
algebra class. You'd think I'd have a lot of real bright kids in that class
because it's an elective. Well, it might surprise you
who gets in that class, just because their mothers and fathers want to see their kids being prepared for college. You know, it's a kind of feather in their cap to say to their neighbor, "My kid is taking algebra in junior high-too bad yours isn't!" So kids get in that class for all kinds of reasons, even though it's supposed to be reserved for honors kids. Some just can't handle it. I start teaching equations with one and then two unknowns, and these kids are freaking out. They say I'm moving too fast, so I slow down a bit. Then they say they need more practice problems, so I give them an extra handout. Then they want the answers to the practice problems in advance so they can check their work. If I gave them the answers to the problems, half the class would copy them onto the handout without learning a thing. So I have to be careful not to change my routine and in the end make matters worse. That's what I think some of the other teachers do around here. They keep changing and to their surprise many of their changes don't work. They would have been better off sticking to what they started out doing and not risking the chance of making things worse. That way they wouldn't be flitting from one approach to another, never settling on a routine.

I've thought this problem through very carefully. The administration is always going to stick these kids in my class because of parental pressure. What I have to do is give some of these students a graceful way out, without embarrassing anyone. So, I give a diagnostic test at the end of the first week, to see who is prepared for algebra. Students who score below my cutoff are told they are at high risk of failing unless they make up their deficiencies. I give them a chance to leave the class or to study their seventh grade books to bone up on what they don't know. To be fair about it, I put some reference books in the library that they can use, but few ever do.

If some kids don't get the message then, they get it after my first or second test. The tests go back to some of their seventh grade work, just to see if they've learned what they were supposed to. By now, the ones who shouldn't have been in my class in the first place are begging to get out-so it's their choice, not mine or the administration's. They're convinced that the class isn't for them, and you should see the difference it makes during the rest of the year. Everybody wins. I'm happy to have an easier class, the administration is happy that they didn't have to say "no" to parents, and the kids are happy they can take something easier.

Less-experienced teachers wouldn't have thought of how to arrange things so no one gets hurt in a situation like this. They would have tried to beat algebra into the heads of these kids and then halfway through the semester would have to lower their standards so everyone passed with an A or B. So you see, I have problems too. I just handle them differently.
Sheila

Every year I look back and I'm amazed at how much I've changed. I don't think that could be said about many other jobs - I mean their capacity to change you. That's because a school like this - maybe any school - has so many obstacles you have to cross: different types of students, different levels of curriculum, different parent expectations. With all the variety around here, you have to keep changing just to keep up.

Take the other day during my sixth-period class. I've taught that lesson a hundred times, but that morning I asked myself out of the blue what I liked most about it and what I liked the least - kind of as a pep-up to get me to want to teach the same old thing one more time. I thought to myself, "Is there something about this lesson I really don't like?" Asking that kind of question sort of scared me, because it got me in touch with my feelings and opened up a whole can of worms. Maybe it's poorly organized, needs better examples, or belongs somewhere else in the curriculum? If you're not careful, you can lose a lot of confidence in yourself by asking questions like that. But I've done it before, and they're not so scary anymore, because I don't let the answers frighten me. If they say I could be doing something better, it's just one more problem that I can try to fix and have fun doing it.

As it turned out, I probably asked that question because deep inside I already had some doubts about that lesson - the way I was handling it, I mean. As it turned out, I did: I remembered the uneasiness I felt the last time I taught it. It's not that things went badly, but I know when I finish a lesson and everything goes right, I get this really good feeling inside - like I'm Number One. Maybe it's like when some athlete scores a touchdown or hits a home run, as if I've wanted it to happen for a long time and then, out of the blue, it happens - and I soak up all the enjoyment before my next class begins. I never before had that feeling after teaching this lesson, and then I thought why. It went back to some of the reasons I became a teacher - one of which was to teach kids to teach themselves, to make them learn from their own experiences without always being spoon-fed - just the way it is in real life.

During the lesson students are asked to recite the correct form of a sentence out loud, and then another student is free to raise his or her hand and correct the answer if anything is wrong with it. I don't know how many times I've done this, and it always seemed to go smoothly. The kids take ordered turns at reading their sentences from the workbook while the others look for their mistakes.

Now, the truth of the matter is, this lesson is as boring as hell for
me and the students. First of all, if someone doesn't like someone else, they look harder for mistakes; if they don't care who's reciting, they don't listen carefully and usually miss some pretty important mistakes. So what really happens is that I do most of the correcting. The students stop participating because they don't want to compete with my answers. In thinking about this lesson, I realized that I'm doing all the teaching, even though it's supposed to be a peer teaching situation. What really struck me is how different this lesson is from ones I teach in which I try to get students to think for themselves, to find and correct their own mistakes. The way this lesson was planned, all the answers were being handed to the students on a silver platter, and not much participation was going on.

So I thought to myself, "How could I organize this lesson differently, to get students to discover their mistakes?" This may seem odd, but on the spur of the moment I assigned every student a partner; I just created pairs without much thought to who would be paired with whom so that there wouldn't be a tendency for friends or enemies to come together. Then, I said, "Exchange exercises," and gave them 15 minutes for each partner to correct the other's work by placing a circle around any answers or parts of answers that looked suspicious. Then they returned the exercises to their partners and I went on to the second part.

Next I asked students to look at any circled portion on their own exercises and, if they felt it was a genuine error, to cite the rule from the chapter and then correct it in the margin. This took about another 15 minutes. Now came the part I wasn't sure would work. I left the last 15 minutes to identify any sentences their partners said were wrong but where they didn't agree. It was their responsibility to cite a rule from the chapter saying that the sentence was correct. Students got one point for finding an error on their partner's paper, and one point taken away if they had made a mistake in finding an error.

All this created quite a stir, which was the scary part. I thought, "Will all this create too much commotion?" It took some pretty fancy footwork on my part to keep things orderly during the last 15 minutes, because some pairs had a tendency to argue about whether an answer was right or wrong, without going to the book. That's when I would step in and settle the dispute. I had to be looking for nonproductive arguments.

I couldn't believe all the interest this generated for an otherwise pretty boring lesson. I think it really surprised me, because it wasn't easy to pull off, especially toward the end when everyone was tallying their scores. This was one of those lessons when I felt like a star athlete who had just scored a touchdown. I took a chance-risked an otherwise
orderly class to try out an idea I thought up on the spur of the moment. Then I thought, "It really wasn't just that this lesson turned out well that made me feel good, but that it was something that no one else was doing." I don't know too many other jobs that let you be creative like that. If you ask me, if you can't make it fun and daring, you'll burn out as a teacher.

Now, what was interesting to me about this—and this is how I find myself changing—is that a few years ago I might have tried something like this—but if it failed, I would have failed. In other words, I wouldn't have been able to separate what happened from my own responsibility for it. What I'm saying is that even if my little experiment hadn't worked, I would have said, "Oh, hum, next time I'll try something else," or changed it in some way to make it better. A few years ago, I would have been crushed for days and probably wouldn't have tried anything like it again for a long time. In fact, I can remember plenty of instances—the principal comes in to tell me I'm being too noisy, or the activity I'm using doesn't work because I forgot to include something, or the kids hate what I'm doing and don't cooperate. I would have stayed clear of anything like it for months or until I forgot what happened. Now I feel a lot different about things that don't work—and about half of what I try doesn't work.

I don't judge myself so harshly or even consider my ego is at stake when I try something new. When you've been around as long as I have, you know your self-worth can't depend on what is happening in your classroom. There are too many unexpected events there to blame yourself when something doesn't go right. What I blame myself for is not trying something different when I know what I'm doing doesn't work. I say, "Well, this lesson could be better but at least no one's making a fuss so I'll keep on plugging in the same old nonsense." I think like that some of the time, but every year the percentage goes down. Little by little, I'm getting to the point I can change whatever I'm doing to match my feelings.

Reflections

In this episode we find Angela still trying to survive, Kurt as orderly and organized as before, and Sheila continuing to show a zest and enthusiasm for turning problems into opportunities. In short, we see Angela continuing to focus on problems related to self, Kurt on problems related to the teaching task, and Sheila on problems related to her impact on students. Let's look back now on some of the events that are leading them in these directions.
Angela

In an earlier visit we saw how Angela looked to her principal, counselor, and others to help her deal with Terrence—a particularly troublesome contradiction to her belief that all kids will obey and want to learn. Her solution to problems at this stage of her development was to either ignore the problem or expect someone else to assume responsibility for it. As she quickly learned, however, there may be more problems in her classroom than there are people who can assume responsibility for them.

Here we see one of the first signs of growth in Angela. After a year of teaching, she has come to rely less on others and more on her own abilities to make decisions and solve problems. As Angela becomes more experienced, she will begin to distinguish problems that require the intervention of others from those that do not. This is one of the most difficult distinctions a beginning teacher has to learn, since many of the considerations that govern when a problem should be brought to the attention of others are unspoken and unwritten—and often vary from one school to another. When to send a student to the office and when not to is often a fine line that takes considerable vigilance to the surrounding climate to learn. For Angela, one good sign is that now not all problems are the result of or the responsibility of others. Angela is coming to realize the kinds of decisions that she alone can and should make.

We can also see the beginning of Angela's movement from a concern for self to a concern for the teaching task. Although this stage of development has only begun for Angela, it is already helping her deal more predictably with the events around her. Angela indicates that this year seems to be better than last.

Last year I'd figure out what I was going to do 20 minutes before school started. This year I can actually spend a little time after school planning.

Planning has become a tool to make her classroom life more orderly. While still pursuing a heavy schedule of seatwork, Angela has begun to take charge of her own environment and to change the pattern of the previous year.

Last year the kids controlled everything—I mean if we didn't finish a unit, then we didn't finish it. I was too scared to change things—like teach the hard things over again if they didn't learn or use a demonstration or discussion to get a point across. Instead, I would spend most of the time in seatwork—except for reading—just to keep the class under control. Now I feel I can be more daring, even though I'm still frightened whenever I try something new.
Angela has yet to focus on her impact on students, but a movement from her own survival to the task of teaching is clearly under way. In the months and years ahead, we might expect Angela to become more daring in ways that actively engage her students in the learning process.

Kurt

In this visit we again see that Kurt's preferred style of teaching is to establish a predictable structure and routine. This becomes apparent when we learn how Kurt chooses to handle the problem of ill-prepared students. He gives a test to weed out unprepared students, to make his algebra class more uniform in ability. To be sure, ill-prepared students are a fact of life that affect how or even if others in a class can learn, but the motives behind his approach may be the most telling with regard to Kurt's stage of development. If Kurt removes less-prepared students from his class solely to create a more predictable and ordered environment, Kurt has focused on the teaching task to the exclusion of his impact on students. If Kurt has selected his approach as the most practical solution to promoting the achievement of all students, then he may have begun a move from concern for the teaching task to concern for his impact on students.

Also, we see that Kurt makes few apologies for choosing teaching for the security and orderliness it offers. He seems to relish the fact that his job is always there for the asking and that little is likely to disturb his organized routine. Here too we see a change underway. Kurt's wish to become an administrator seems to suggest that security alone is not enough. Kurt appears to need not just a secure job but an important job—one with authority and responsibility that is obvious to the eyes of others. Whether such a change in Kurt's life will have meaningful consequences for how he views himself as a teacher remains to be seen. One thing is certain: Kurt, like Angela, has yet to find a purpose for teaching that expresses who he really is.

Finally, we can note that one possible limitation to Kurt's carefully orchestrated approach to teaching is that it assumes that all worthy outcomes come from a highly predictable classroom environment. A stellar athletic performance, scientific breakthrough, or impromptu speech: all give testimony to the value of the unpredictable—as do many of the desirable events that occur in classrooms. At times a classroom may profit from a climate of unpredictability to seize upon and even create unique opportunities that cannot be anticipated—for initiating spontaneous group discussion, relating subject-matter content to personal experiences, or using the unique responses of students as vehicles for instruction. These are events that may not always fit into Kurt's neatly organized structure and routine, but they too are vehicles for learning.
Sheila

With this visit we see a clearer picture of who Sheila is and what she wishes to become. In an earlier visit, Sheila pointed to the influence Martha had on her career. Recall that one of the things Sheila took away from that experience was the importance of finding a purpose for teaching—something more than a paycheck, job security, and the privilege of being a teacher. In this visit, we learn what that purpose is:

I've wanted it to happen for a long time and, then, out of the blue, it happens—and I soak up all the enjoyment before my next class begins. I never before had that feeling after teaching this lesson, and then I thought why. It went back to some of the reasons I was a teacher—one of which was to teach kids to teach themselves, to make them learn from their own experiences—without always being spoon-fed—just the way it is in real life.

Here Sheila reveals the source of her commitment—and flow. Sheila's personal purpose for teaching allows her to be playful but also to direct her playfulness in a meaningful direction. As with Mark's behavior on the playground, Sheila was willing to take a risk—to try something new—but not just anything new. It had to fulfill a purpose that represented her own bedrock convictions of what teaching was all about and about which she would never compromise. Only those deepest feelings could drive Sheila hard enough to risk looking silly if things didn't turn out right, and if they didn't, to give Sheila the strength to come back again to try something else that would better serve her purpose. Recall how Sheila explains how her purpose gave her the courage to try something new.

A few years ago I might have tried something like this—but if it failed, I would have failed. In other words, I wouldn't have been able to separate what happened from my own responsibility for it. What I'm saying is that even if my little experiment hadn't worked, I would have said, "Oh hum, next time I'll try something else," or changed it in some way to make it better.

Sheila is expressing her ability to separate the process of discovery and innovation from a result. The result was her new approach for pairing students in game-like fashion to correct their own mistakes. The process was her trying to do something to change a lesson into a more meaningful learning experience. By separating the two, Sheila no longer ran the risk that if what she produced (her approach) did not work, the process of trying something new had to be discarded as well. This separation allows her to maintain a
sense of self-worth when things don't go right, and new and innovative responses can continue under the most difficult of circumstances. This is indeed a praiseworthy state to achieve in a society that rarely separates our sense of self-worth from the products and accomplishments we produce, yet it is an indispensable quality for being an effective teacher in an environment in which problems may outnumber accomplishments.

One of the most tangible benefits of Sheila's self-worth is the self-reflection and personal inquiry it promotes. Because Sheila's self-worth was not at stake, she could be in touch with her feelings—what felt good and what didn't. She could ask tough but important questions that less experienced teachers wouldn't want to consider. In Sheila's words:

I thought to myself, "Is there something about this lesson I really don't like?" Asking that kind of question sort of scared me, because it got me in touch with my feelings and opened up a whole can of worms. Maybe it's poorly organized, needs better examples, or belongs somewhere else in the curriculum? If you're not careful, you can lose a lot of confidence in yourself by asking questions like that, but I've done it before and they're not so scary anymore, because I don't let the answers frighten me. If I could be doing something better, it's just one more problem that I can try to fix and have fun doing it.

Sheila is describing her ability to change to match the situation at hand and to look realistically at her own behavior. The danger of which Sheila speaks is to engage in prolonged introspection during which she might become self-critical, but self-reflection directed by her own feelings brings intellect and feeling together in a combination more powerful than either alone. In other words, Sheila's heart and mind are working together first to become aware of her feelings, then to use her feelings to guide her actions. Now, Self 2 is in command, albeit aided by Self 1 at an earlier time.

In contrast, notice how little Angela and Kurt trusted their own feelings in making decisions. Angela first clung to her superiors for the solutions she needed, and later to textbooks and lecturers. Likewise, Kurt tenaciously adhered to an organized routine, delivered exclusively by Self 1 from his schoolhouse learning and previous experience. In either case, responses were provided that fit some previous form or pattern. Only Sheila could break from tradition, since Self 2—her performing self—could use the information provided by Self 1—her thinking self—to create unique patterns of behavior that matched the events before her. She was sensing a source of change or growth within herself.

We conclude this visit by summarizing some of the characteristics that have come to define the lives of our three teachers thus far. In subsequent visits, we will return to define and expand further each of these portraits.
Angela
Consider teaching just a job
Overwhelmed by complexity
Blots out feelings
Observes self judgmentally
Afraid to take risks
Activities are chosen in the absence of purpose
Tied to the security of the past
Most capable of inaction
Frightened of student independence and decision making
Has a limited stimulus field that is focused on self-her numbness amplifier is "on"
Has not yet discovered her own purpose for teaching
Never thinks about values
Focuses primarily on needs of self

Kurt
Considers teaching a secure job
Limits and controls complexity
Denies feelings
Does not observe self at all
Never takes a risk
Activities are chosen to serve a false or shallow purpose
Tied to the structure and routine of the present
Most capable of repeating actions
Limits student independence and decision making
Has a selective stimulus field that is focused on task; his numbness amplifier is "on" for all non-task concerns
Has purpose for teaching that is someone else's
Values what others appear to value
Focuses primarily on needs of the teaching task

Sheila
Considers teaching a purposeful job
Lets in complexity
Aware of her feelings
Observes self without incriminating judgment
Engages in risk-taking often
Activities are chosen that match her purpose
Tied to the challenge of the future
Most capable of unique actions
Uses student independence and decision making
Has a stimulus field focused on impact; her numbness amplifier is "off"
Has a purpose for teaching that expresses who she is
Knows what she values
Focuses primarily on needs of students
CHAPTER EIGHT
Effective Teachers

All teachers at some time or other exhibit playfulness, concentration, flow, and affect. Those who show these qualities exude a certain exuberance for life and for teaching that often defies the sometimes dismal conditions that surround them.

I recall once observing in a particularly destitute inner-city school. In the midst of the shoddy condition of the school building, overcrowded classrooms, and low teacher morale, I came upon a gem of a teacher. What was so surprising was that she seemed unaffected by all the dreariness around her, which included a scary looking, unmotivated, and combative group of students. She simply seemed not to notice it all, while I spent most of the morning reeling under the shock of seeing a real inner-city school, the kind some of us either do not know exist or don't care to acknowledge.

What it was about this teacher that especially caught my attention was the degree to which the qualities we have been talking about were able to capture her kids. The kids were taken completely off guard by her because she was responding with playfulness, concentration, flow, and affect that provided an endless variety of responses that were not canned and could not be predicted from any traditional model of good teaching, yet each student response/teacher reaction sequence was meaningful in conveying a point or fulfilling a student need. This teacher literally was playing at teaching, as she knew she must to capture the attention of her students and fulfill the many unique needs—for knowledge, attention, dominance, respect, love, security—that were shown to her that morning.

Her concentration was evident as she accurately picked out of each student response the covert need hidden behind it. Requests for information were sometimes treated as needs for attention and responded to accordingly. Dominance behaviors were sometimes seen as needs for respect, and acting-out behaviors were sometimes treated for what they were—attempts to gain the attention of others. In other words, this teacher's eye was concentrating on the stimulus field, not the lesson plan or textbook, although these were the objects to which student attention was ultimately being directed. This
teacher was responding to the hidden codes of the classroom and interpreting them in terms of a variety of student needs. That took uninterrupted concentration and a willingness to trust herself to respond in ways never before used.

It was interesting to see that not all of this teacher's reactions to her students worked. In fact, if they had, the situation would not have been so interesting, since it would have been a classroom like none that I have ever seen before, taught by a peerlessly effective teacher, and so I would have readily dismissed my experience as a freak of nature. However, such was not the case in this classroom, as plenty of errors of judgment accompanied creative and spontaneous responses that worked. The way this was done was by establishing a flow in which the success or failure of any student response/teacher reaction sequence did not influence this teacher's judgment about any subsequent sequence. In other words, the teacher's successes and failures were not dictating her performance—the needs of the students were, however masked by human emotions and contrivances they may have been.

That's what kept the flow going independent of the disruptive influence of Self 1. This teacher did not stop to listen to her own evaluation of what was working and what was not. To do so in so fast-paced an environment would have surely lost the momentum and brought to her attention some errors of judgment that were being made—or some reactions to student responses that just didn't work. Also, as strange as it may seem, this teacher was also not focusing on her successes. In other words, what worked one time was not fooling the teacher into believing it would work another time. To be sure, her affective buffer was absorbing the experience. At the time of a needed response, she did not consult an analytical review of an earlier response but an affect image or sensitivity to her own feeling as to what the right response was. For this she needed to trust herself, be vulnerable to making mistakes, and draw from within the courage and commitment to create a response that might never have been given before.

For most of us this is a most difficult task, since we are all tied to the past more strongly than to either the present or the future. It was precisely the ability to break from the security of past actions that let this teacher put the judgmental observations of Self 1 to rest and allowed her to feel for a response from within, unlike any response that had been given before, not just once, but time and again as each new student response called for a new and often unique teacher reaction. That morning this teacher somehow dredged from within herself a willingness to play at teaching, concentrate on the needs of her students, lay to rest self-evaluative judgments, and trust in herself. She was, in a phrase, surpassing her own expectations. To better understand this teacher's behavior and how you too can surpass your own expectations, let's examine several different stages of professional growth through which most teachers pass in surpassing their own expectations.
Teachers can usually be placed in one of three stages that include increasing amounts of playfulness, concentration, flow, and affect. These stages represent increasingly mature and effective levels of professional growth. While it is tempting to associate them with years of teaching experience, the association is surprisingly limited. Let's examine these stages, suggested by Fuller (1969), to see if you can recognize them.

The first and most elementary stage of professional growth is one in which the teacher is survival-oriented. It is a stage through which most new teachers pass, characterized by a teacher's primary concern for his or her own survival, getting through the day, looking good in the eyes of others, and controlling the class so as not to attract the attention of other teachers or an administrator. Teachers at this stage of their careers are driven by their own anxieties and fears and a concern for appearance. They often express concerns such as: Do the students really like me? Will I perform well when a supervisor is present? Will I be accepted and respected by the other teachers?

These teachers share the common threads of being insecure, self-centered, and perpetually exhausted. To keep up appearances they become fitters-flitting from one approach or teaching style to another, trying almost anything to look capable. Most of us are committed to this stage for some length of time as a result of the deep void between our college training and the realities of our first classroom experience. It is where most of us begin, but some teachers stay at this stage longer than others and a few never leave it. Teachers in this phase are characterized by their survival orientation, inward focus, need for direction, feelings of insecurity, and, sometimes, facesaving authoritarian style.

Since it is exhausting to stay survival-oriented for very long, most teachers struggle hard to reach a second phase of professional growth. In this next stage the teacher exchanges self-orientation for task-orientation. These individuals establish routines, value rigid control and are highly organized-so organized that they have a good deal of trouble surviving in a world of rapid change. They are, however, very efficient-so efficient, in fact, they never take the risks needed to change. They are, quite frankly, boring teachers who are successful, but only in covering the course content in proven ways and in controlling the class, so they are sometimes confused with truly effective teachers by both peers and administrators. These teachers express concerns such as: What types of materials should I use? With what techniques can I maintain an appropriate degree of class control? How can I organize my lessons more efficiently?

To maintain their psychologically comforting niche, they attack and sometimes try to undermine anything that does not fit their accepted pattern. They are anti-change, anti-innovation and anti-everything that could possibly upset the status quo. They sometimes spend more time and energy making themselves secure than they do teaching. They repeat their successes-
what works for them—time and again. They are on cruise control most of their professional lives. These individuals are characterized by being highly (sometimes overly) organized, rigid in their patterns, resistant to new conditions, and supportive of the rules by which they maintain their own position and the status quo.

Our final stage of professional growth is represented by teachers who are impact-oriented. Their foremost concern is not with themselves or their task but with their students. They are consumed with an interest in and concern for the impact they have on the academic lives of their students. They express concerns such as: How can I challenge unmotivated students? What can I do to ensure that my students apply what they learn? Am I meeting the social and emotional needs of my students?

They also accept dissent, disagreement, and challenges in their classrooms. They accept bad news and failure one minute, and in the next have a suggestion for making things better. They look for new ways to fit old parts together in unusual ways and thereby require few new resources. They sometimes even take what others have discarded or failed to notice and put it to use. They also are the epitome of creativity by integrating into their teaching new and sometimes untried behaviors, procedures, and materials. They innovate, integrate, and have an eye for effect. Especially when it comes to effects, they know that impact is only attainable if they focus on specifics—choosing their shots carefully and expending their valuable but limited energy where it counts the most. In other words, they know what can and can’t be changed in their classrooms, and they aim carefully to make every shot count. Teachers at this stage of growth are in touch with the interests and ability levels of their students, search for innovative solutions, are highly adaptable and flexible, and are prone to take risks by suggesting new plans and ideas that may not at first be accepted by their peers. They know what they want to change in themselves and in others, and aim their limited energy where it will count the most.

The reader will recognize that these three stages of professional growth are represented in our portraits of Angela, Kurt, and Sheila. The accompanying diagram shows how each differs according to our three stages of growth.

You can find out what stage of growth you most strongly identify with at this stage of your professional life by reading each of the statements below and then, asking yourself: When I think about teaching, how concerned about this am I? Write one of the numbers below to the left of each statement to indicate your level of concern.

1: Not concerned
2: A little concerned
3: Moderately concerned
4: Very concerned
5: Totally preoccupied
1. Having insufficient clerical help
2. Gaining students' respect
3. Coping with too many extra duties and responsibilities
4. Doing well when I'm observed
5. Helping students to value learning
6. Having insufficient time for rest and class preparation
7. Getting too little assistance from specialized teachers
8. Managing my time efficiently
9. Losing the respect of my peers
10. Having too little time for grading and testing
11. Coping with the inflexibility of the curriculum
12. Having too many standards and regulations set for teachers
13. Worrying about my ability to prepare adequate lesson plans
14. Having my inadequacies become known to other teachers
15. Increasing students' feelings of accomplishment
16. Dealing with the rigid instructional routine
17. Diagnosing students' learning problems
18. Wondering if the principal may think there's too much noise in my classroom
19. Helping each student reach his or her potential
20. Obtaining a favorable evaluation of my teaching
21. Having too many students in a class
22. Recognizing the social and emotional needs of students
23. Challenging unmotivated students
24. Losing the respect of my students
25. Worrying about lack of financial support for schools
26. Trying to maintain control of the class
27. Having insufficient time to plan
28. Getting students to behave
29. Understanding why certain students make slow progress
30. Having an embarrassing incident occur in my classroom for which I might be judged responsible
31. Being unable to cope with troublemakers
32. Worrying that my peers may think I'm not doing an adequate job
33. Testing my ability to work with disruptive students
34. Understanding ways in which student's health and nutrition problems can affect learning
35. Appearing competent to parents
36. Meeting the needs of different kinds of students
37. Seeking alternative ways to ensure that students learn the subject matter
38. Understanding the psychological and cultural differences that can affect my students' behavior
39. Adapting myself to the needs of different students
40. Coping with the large number of administrative interruptions
41. Guiding students toward intellectual and emotional growth
42. Working with too many students each day
43. Getting students to apply what they learn
44. Teaching effectively when another teacher is present
45. Understanding what factors motivate students to learn

The following items represent the dimensions of Self, Task, and Impact.

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Effective Teachers

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To determine your score, add the total of your responses for the items in each of the three categories of concern—Self, Task, and Impact. The higher your score in a category (out of a maximum total of 75 per category), the more you are identified with that stage of concern.

The implications of these stages of growth have several important consequences for the development of teachers. Most teachers pass through and sometimes revisit these phases in the course of their teaching careers. Researchers have suggested (Fuller, 1969; Borich, 1992; Hall & Hord, 1987) that it may take years for some teachers to move from focus on self-survival to focus on their impact on students. The physical, mental, and emotional state of the teacher can be expected to play an important role in the shift from one stage to another.

There are several other implications as well. Some teachers might return to an earlier stage—for example, from a concern for their impact on students back to a concern for task, as a result of having to teach a new grade or subject. Or they might move from a concern for task back to a concern for self as a result of having to teach in a new, unfamiliar school. The time spent in a stage the second time might be shorter than the first. Thus, stages of growth may not always be determined developmentally, but may be context-dependent as well. Finally, the three stages of growth need not be exclusive of one another. A teacher could have a focus predominantly in one area, while having a focus of lesser intensity in one or both of the other stages.

Although these stages of growth have many implications for the training of teachers, one of the most important may be that the former two stages are best achieved through the latter. In other words, a laborious plodding through the initial two phases of growth may not be a precondition for attaining the third and highest level of growth. This is, in fact, what happens to a small number of beginning teachers who, so to speak, hit the classroom running. They have already arrived at a way of thinking and acting that reflects a concern for their impact on students, precluding lengthy bouts with their own fear of survival and a rigid organizational routine. Surprisingly, like the effective teacher of long standing, they already have a well-developed response mechanism that is delivering creative and unique responses to fit students' learning needs. How do they do it?
Somewhere along the line they learned the value of playfulness, concentration, flow, and their own affect—and how to use them in a decision-making setting. Once these are put into practice, concerns for survival and the teaching task become less influential in directing their behavior. They are able to shut off the judgmental observations of Self 1 without destroying the content it can provide. They are able to perform as Mark did, without the conscious aid of schoolhouse learning, and thereby are able to become more aware of and responsive to the behavior of their students and their impact on it. This is an important difference between teachers who are still laboring with concerns for self and the teaching task and those who have become attuned to their impact on students. Because these teachers have narrowed the stimulus field to their impact on students, they are concentrating on the most important target of all: their students. Each teacher response is formed out of an awareness of where the student is. Their own fears and even the mechanics of the task itself become unnoticeable, as their focus of decision making is out there where it should be, not in their heads, trying to remember something learned earlier and what to do with it once remembered.

Knowledge, facts, and even past experiences do not release affect images from which rapid-fire decisions that meet unique student needs are made. These images are released by feelings that absorb the events around you and generate for you a new and unique response from your affective buffer. If your numbness amplifier is on, you will not feel the events around you. If you are not concentrating on your students, your stimulus field will be too broad to invoke the proper response. If you do not allow the response to emerge unhampered by the judgmental observations of Self 1, you will be robbed of your most natural and effective response.

A graceful and nimble sequence of responding like that used by that inner-city classroom teacher described above does not come easily. As we have seen, it is often possible only when the teacher has entered into the highest phase of professional growth; concern for his or her impact on students. To help us understand this highest level of growth better, let's turn to another culture that also has included growth among its teachings and writings.

The philosophies of India teach that there are at least three aims toward which people should strive. The first is duty and virtue, dictated by the individual's place in the social order. For a teacher this aim would be fulfilled by completing tasks ascribed to teachers, that is, the duties assigned to them by society and by the schools for which they work. The Indian perspective sees the fulfillment of this aim or stage of life as only the beginning of a journey toward meaning and fulfillment. There are, in fact, more aims one must acquire and eventually pass in order to experience the most satisfying and personally rewarding phase of one's life work.
The next aim represents the attainment of success or achievement. This aim gains the individual the physical accoutrements of having succeeded—respect from peers, a good class schedule, a higher rung on the career ladder. There are, of course, many in life—in schools and elsewhere—pursuing this aim earnestly for most of their adult lives. However, to do so, according to the Indian philosophers, would be to miss the most meaningful and fulfilling state in life. To achieve that, yet another aim must be pursued.

This final aim, known as *mosksha* in the Sanskrit language, represents a stage of release or freedom. These terms, as the philosophers use them, do not mean the same as we think of them in our culture. This aim is not saying, "Do what you please," but rather, "Be free of the strict confines of yourself, particularly that part of you that casts disruptive judgments upon your actions." This aim is what makes possible the nimble and graceful responses of an effective teacher who is operating with a concern for impact on students. It is created by releasing oneself from all the lesser aims of life: routine allegiance to duty and secular achievement. Only then can one slip out of mind, leaving Self 1 behind, and come to grips with one's feelings, from which rapid, natural, and spontaneous decision making can come.

*Mosksha*, that highest and most satisfying end, which should direct one's life energy, is none other than the coming together of play, concentration, flow, and affect images, so that one is released from old patterns and free to form new ones spontaneously and creatively. The aims of duty and achievement, if taken by themselves, lock up our ability to respond with anything but learned responses. Because they have been learned from outside ourselves, we are never quite committed to them enough to go the distance or to see us through particularly difficult times. Duty, achievement, and even the material rewards that come from them go only so far in getting us through a disordered environment. They work for a time, but in the midst of hardship and pain, even the momentary pleasures of doing one's duty or the personal achievement that may result from it, wear off quickly as incentives to continue along a difficult course.

All this is to say that the lesser aims in life do not provide the incentive or energy to surpass ourselves—to top all previous performances and set a new standard, which also can be surpassed at another time and place.

It is interesting to observe how much of a teacher's time and energy can be devoted to self and task concerns, which are not unlike the lesser aims of duty and achievement. A concern for impact is important because it focuses on the most important stimulus field of all—students—while the aim of release and freedom allows new responses to be created in response to this stimulus field, ones that have not been rehearsed or previously learned. These are important considerations in dealing with a stimulus field that is likely to provide an infinite variety of events engendered by rapid cycles of value change, fewer and fewer of which, in today's classrooms, can be anticipated. In the
pages ahead we will have more to say about responding rapidly to a complex stimulus field. For now, let's see how successful teachers have attained a concern for impact and a feeling of freedom and release.

Success is a nebulous word. It means many things to many people. In the preceding pages I have suggested some of the things that successful teaching is not. It is not a concern for self or task, although sometimes the former and many times the latter are mistaken for it. It is not achieved with the aims of duty and achievement, at least not in the absence of any higher aim. These are often associated with success-in professional publications, career ladders, and inservice workshops. However, by themselves they do not constitute success in the classroom, nor will they add meaning and fulfillment to your professional life. They simply restructure the status quo and, while they may convey a feeling of power to temporarily manipulate the environment around you, they add nothing new to who you are and deprive you of the most precious gift of all-growth.

I had this point driven home to me while attending a meeting at a hotel next to an Indian reservation outside Santa Fe, New Mexico. I arrived early and decided to walk around the grounds, just as the sun was beginning to set behind the mountains. I stumbled upon a little campground not too far from my lodging. There were five or six well-dressed men sitting on a log near a fire that had been built in the middle of an open area. I had just sat down at the far end of an adjoining log when from behind the fire emerged a very old Indian. This Indian looked authentic. After a moment of skepticism, it dawned on me that I was staying at a lodge adjoining an Indian reservation.

We were all quite startled since the Indian had appeared so quietly, almost like a puff of smoke. Without a word he squatted in front of the first man, looked him squarely in the eyes and asked, "Are you a success?" You could see that the man was taken aback by the abruptness of the question, but after a little hesitation he answered, "Yes." The Indian continued, "How are you a success?" "I'm the head of my company's computer products," the man said. The Indian moved to within a few inches of the man's face, obviously breaching his personal space, and said in a low voice, "But that is not success!" The man's expression went blank and, then, the Indian moved to the next man on the log and asked the same question, "Are you a success?" The man responded by informing the Indian that he had just returned from opening a new distribution center for his company. Again, the Indian responded with, "But that is not success."

The Indian went down the line, asking the same question of the others and, although the answers got more creative-one man had invented a new gizmo for a dot matrix printer, another ran the company's recruiting office—the Indian responded in the same manner. No response seemed to please him. Then, the old Indian moved in front of me at the far end of the circle.
I first wanted to tell him that I wasn't with those other people, but realized nothing was going to stop him. Predictably, he asked, "Are you a success?" To tell you the truth, for a grown man I was pretty frightened. For the first time I got a good look at this Indian, and he looked as if he was a hundred years old. His skin was red, and he had deep grooves down both cheeks as if someone had taken a fork and gouged out channels for the perspiration to run off his face. When he spoke the air was monstrous and, I thought to myself, no imposter would have breath like that!

I didn't want to play his game, but felt I would have to. So, having the benefit of the experiences of the men who spoke before me, I answered the old Indian's question with, "No, I am not a success." Then, feeling awkward, I continued, "But my daughter is!" I cannot for the life of me explain why I brought my daughter into this, save for the fact that I'm very proud of her. The old Indian, couldn't let things go so easily and he asked, "How is she a success?"

The old boy got to me, because I don't mind bragging a little, especially to a stranger. I informed the Indian that my daughter is on the debate team in her high school and had just won second place in a Lincoln-Douglas-style debate meet. I should have known that there was no way to answer the question to his satisfaction; he responded with the customary, "But that is not success." A little hurt by his response and now in a contest to defend my daughter, I quickly followed with the fact that my daughter had made the cheerleading squad and could perform complicated acrobatics while standing on the shoulders of others. His response was the same.

I'll have to say that at this point I had had it. This was exacerbated by the snickering I could hear from the executives seated on the other log. I don't know what made me do it, but I pulled from my subconscious the one thing that I most admire about my daughter. I told the old Indian that my daughter had a special ability to bounce back after having failed at something. I told the Indian that when things go badly for me I stay depressed for days, but my daughter recovers almost immediately, is bright, cheerful, and full of momentum to tackle the challenge again. That is truly a glorious quality and one I instinctively felt the old Indian would not find among the run-of-the mill definitions of success by high-flying business executives. I was wrong.

I was both hurt and astonished that he could not see some meaning of success in my account. Instead, he invoked his by now well-worn phrase, which in the context of my response I decided was meaningless. I even thought that maybe he only knew a few English words and had been trying them out in one meaningless context after another.

Then came what probably was a well-planned climax to this and perhaps many previous episodes like it at this same spot. The old Indian took my hand and placed in it a smooth stone, closing my fingers around it. Just as
his hand had left my hand, and with all the executives coming to take a closer look at what was happening, he said, "These things you say are part of success, but they are not success. Give this magic stone to your daughter and she will be a success."

The old Indian vanished as quickly as he had come. I opened my hand to find a simple stone, a bit unusual in its smoothness and roundness, but nothing that would provoke one to take it to a pawnbroker. I walked back to the main lodge where my meeting was about to begin and could hear the executives, who were walking behind me, arguing among themselves. They were, it seemed, a bit perturbed that none of them had gotten the magic stone. How strange, I thought, for such corporate giants to be arguing over a rock given by an old Indian.

The next morning I showed the hotel clerk the stone and asked if he knew anything about it and the old Indian who had appeared the night before. He said the rock came from the mountain a few thousand feet above the lodge and that, although not a kind found at lower elevations, was not known to possess any special value, except for the fact that the Indians who lived nearby believed that they brought magic to those who climbed to the higher elevation to find them. With a slight smile, he said they are called "magic rocks."

All the way home the next day I thought about this silly event that might as well have appeared in a cartoon, except for the fact that I was there and it happened to me. I kept mulling over in my mind if there really was some meaning—a message—that the old Indian was giving. I certainly wasn't going to believe that stone had magic, but then what did it have, if anything? The old Indian didn't strike me as being dumb or deceitful; he seemed, on the contrary, to express a kind of wisdom we in our hectic fast-paced lives haven't the time for, but what was the message?

It really wasn't clear to me until I got home and gave the stone to my daughter; neither of us believed it could invoke any magic but we did not say so. Then the message was clear—in her face, in her expression, and afterward in her behavior. First, I can say my daughter was very happy and surprised that someone she didn't even know wanted her to be a success, and it certainly didn't hurt that her father must have felt the same way to take the time to talk about her to a stranger. Even my daughter's behavior was influenced, which was shown by a flurry of confidence and even some tangible achievements in school, debate, and athletics—to which she carried the stone religiously. The truth is that the stone did have a kind of magic—not, of course, because it was magical, but because it showed that two people, one a stranger and one she had known all her life, believed in her.

What was the old Indian trying to say with his gift? I believe he was saying that, in his as well as our own culture, a belief in oneself is more important than any personal accomplishment, which is all that the executives and I provided him. All of us need a magic stone that makes us believe in
our own success. What the old Indian was saying is that a belief in ourselves—in this instance helped by a magic stone—is the real springboard to accomplishment—a springboard that can create untold accomplishments. Belief changes the focus of our attention from a product to be attained to a process to be pursued. The former ends with the product; the latter starts us on a journey that never ends.

Those teachers who are concerned with self and task are driven by a destination, not a journey, as are teachers who pursue the lesser aims of duty and achievement. Those are ends that make little allowance for a journey from within, driven by a sense of belief in ourselves, that must accompany these lesser goals. Success in teaching is not obtaining a set of skills, competencies, or proficiencies. It is a journey in which we grow personally, fueled by a belief in ourselves. That's the magic!

All effective teachers have magic stones of their own. For many it is their will to believe in themselves. That will creates the magic that gives them a commitment to fulfill their private purpose for being in the classroom. Belief is what, for them, erases the difference between thinking and feeling, allowing them access to the rich pool of responses that lie within their affective buffer—that meeting ground between thinking and doing—and in which lie the untold responses they never knew were accessible to them. A belief in oneself is how so many, before a camera or an audience, surpass their own expectations, and it is how you can surpass yours. It goes without saying that without a deep personal belief in your own uniqueness and potential to succeed you can never be truly effective. Let’s look now at six characteristics of effective teachers that a belief in themselves has helped them to acquire.

**Characteristic 1**

Teachers who believe in themselves discover a purpose for teaching that is greater than presenting only course content. This is a natural result of realizing that as human beings that have uniqueness and potential, there is some higher purpose that they should not only pursue but that they can attain.

One of the greatest confusions that persist among beginning teachers is why they are teaching or want to teach. Much of the time while they are studying to become teachers they are silently asking themselves Why? By the time they have entered the student teaching phase of their training, they know the job is tough, the working conditions difficult, and, relative to many other occupations of equal responsibility, the pay is low. So, why, they ask themselves, are they sacrificing a possible lifetime of effort to become trained for a job in which the rewards will never be commensurate with the human and physical costs. Then come their responses, which they probably keep hidden most of their lives.
Their responses are remarkably similar and often can be grouped. They say they are studying to become teachers because they:

- Feel a commitment or calling to help young children
- Are attracted to a particular subject, grade, or age
- Want a career that assures them a job
- Want a career that allows them time to raise a family
- Have a mother, father, or close relative who is a teacher

Most new teachers raise at least one and sometimes several of these reasons for teaching, if pressed to do so. Surprisingly, none of the above are sufficient to keep a person in the teaching profession once the reality of teaching is experienced firsthand. Good intentions about helping the young, love of second grade kids, historical precedent of three generations of teachers in the family, summers off, and even easy access to employment ring hollow as genuine motives for teaching, once the demands of the task are truly understood. For some this may take no longer than student teaching, after which more than a third never enter a classroom again. The end of the first or second year of teaching sees another 15% leave the classroom. In the critical four- to seven-year period another 20% or so say they have had it, for a variety of reasons.

What happened to those lofty purposes that years earlier were given as sufficient justification for teaching? They went out the window, not because they weren't nice purposes, but because they were not real purposes. Those purposes came from people who had never spent a day of their lives in a classroom—well-meaning but naive about the purposes needed to sustain a teacher in a disordered environment of rapid cycles of value change. The media, community leaders, some college texts, and even a few educators themselves foist upon us do-good purposes that would not sustain even them, if similar circumstances prevailed, in their own occupations.

Although it is not often recognized, our environment immerses—even brainwashes—us in patterns of belief that are not and can never be part of us. Such incongruities can exist for long periods of time, as long as the person holding the incongruous belief never has to face reality. That, of course, is why writing books can be both dangerous and fun—those who write them rarely have to live with the words they write. However, teachers have to live with reality in which they work every day and, so, if your purposes for teaching are not related to your own beliefs, they will never sustain you in a profession that continually asks that you surpass your own expectations.

What is a purpose that is unique to your own beliefs? As we saw in Chapter 5, it is a purpose that expresses who you are. Effective teachers work not just for love of subject matter, historical precedent, commitment to the young; they also work to express themselves. They ask, "How can my
teaching best express who I am?" For that they must search for who they are-for their beliefs and bedrock convictions-that can be played out in the context of the classroom, students, and curriculum. Only then does the equation become balanced between costs and rewards, and only then have they developed a purpose that can sustain them amid rapid cycles of value change.

It is surprising, then, that teacher training programs do not begin by helping students discover a purpose for teaching that can sustain them throughout their teaching careers, and, if none is discovered, informing the students that they have yet to acquire one of the first and most fundamental characteristics of an effective teacher-purpose. It is surprising also that teacher training often does not include the goal of instilling belief -a belief in oneself-that is an equally indispensable characteristic of an effective teacher. Instead, some learn to believe in a vague and nebulous educational system that, without a belief in themselves, could not exist, let alone serve the needs of children.

It is important to note the close and necessary relationship between purpose and belief. A purpose provides the personal direction that can guide you through all sorts of harsh realities, while belief in yourself provides the commitment and will to fulfill the purpose. One without the other is meaningless. Some of today's curricula for training teachers have yet to appreciate the relationship.

Characteristic 2

Another characteristic of effective teachers is that for them the concepts of success and failure do not exist, at least not in their professional lives. They are vigilant observers of their own actions, but they do not pass judgment. In other words, they have subdued the disruptive judgments cast forth by Self 1. Instead of feeling bad or good, they only feel the action that might have made a situation bad or good. Like a good coach, and sometimes with the aid of an observer, they associate their actions with feelings, filling up their affective buffers with images based on the reality of their decisions. They silently ask themselves, "How did it feel?" after a response is made and its effect in the stimulus field is observed. In other words, a link is created between a decision and their students' reaction to it, by consciously noting the naturalness, satisfaction, appropriateness, and effect of the event. Notice that none of the previous adjectives necessarily conveys a value judgment that something was good or bad.

One possible feeling from a teacher response might be that it did not seem natural or fit the occasion, or was not really satisfying, or maybe did not seem appropriate. This feeling is the doorway to an affective image that
can serve future decision making time and again without having to call Self 1 into service. It can also be retrieved and formed into an improved performance far faster than information from Self 1 can be recalled, since we always feel faster than we think. In fact, thinking after feeling sometimes even confuses us, fooling us into an affective image that is part real and part false. How often have we changed a test answer from right to wrong after thinking about it? The key to developing affective images is to become consciously aware of our feelings, treating them as legitimate sources of data and connecting those feelings to the resulting event in the stimulus field. This helps avoid the tendency to judge many of our actions as either success or failure. Success and failure are attributions we and others often give to our actions after they have occurred. They have nothing to do with the event themselves and are often detrimental to improving our performance at another time, since they serve to break our concentration and make us less aware of our feelings and their connection to the stimulus field.

Characteristic 3

Another characteristic of effective teachers is that they know what they value and focus their behavior outwardly on those values. They know what they value because they are conscious of their real purpose for teaching. Through a belief in themselves, they have an agenda to fulfill their purpose. In other words, effective teachers use purpose and belief as a plan of action.

In today's society, we often ask, "Where are our values?" The notion prevails that somewhere along the way we have lost a core of values that may have existed for decades or even centuries before us. The curious thing about such propositions is that they presume someone (e.g., an earlier culture, our ancestry, or history) has given us-bestowed upon us-some system of values that now we may be losing, or have already lost. An alternative to this view is that values are created by those who need them the most-us. Every civilization to some extent creates its own values. Some have been quite barbaric; other values have prevailed since the dawn of time, but those too were created by us. In other words, values have been and always will be tools to get us through life in the most expedient, practical, and personally meaningful way. They are the rules of the game, which may be inspired by many different sources, but in the end are our own creations.

This is an interesting twist to arguments that we have lost or are well into the process of losing our values-the ones that guided our ancestors for centuries. What it says is that new values must continually be created to serve our needs and old values must be refitted to match our current world. The point is that we may not so much have lost our values as we have become sufficiently lazy not to create new ones or to fit old ones into our modern
world, both of which may be necessary for our continued survival. The responsibility for our so-called loss of values, therefore, is not society's; it is yours and mine. Values begin with individuals. Indeed, when enough individuals create the same or similar values, these become society's values, but it is not society that creates them or does away with them-only individuals who decide not to abide by them can do that.

What this means to the effective teacher is that she or he has the right and even the obligation to create values and reformulate old ones to make them recognizable in the new contexts provided by our rapid cycles of value change. Thus, individuals must work harder today than ever before to replenish our stock of values, since today's values seem not to last long or are recognizable for only relatively short periods of time, not like the time of our grandmothers and grandfathers. Our reaction to such rapid change of values and the contexts into which they must fit is that the building of values must be as common in future schools as the writing of behavioral objectives was in years past. Objectives, past or future, are meaningless in the absence of values. That is why personal statements of purpose are so important to teaching. Without them and the personal values from which they spring, objectives, curriculum guides, and state-mandated proficiencies become meaningless to the classroom teacher. It is no wonder so many are leaving the profession at the first sign of hardship; somebody forgot to teach them how to find a purpose, and failing this, they created false ones, such as summers off, "My mother was a teacher," or "I like kids." Such shallow purposes cannot possibly see us through rapid cycles of value change in the disordered environment we will be facing in the years ahead.

Characteristic 4

Another characteristic of effective teachers is that they take joy in creating, innovating, and changing. They play at teaching in unconventional ways. As we have seen earlier, rapid cycles of value change tend to promote a disordered learning environment. Call it a hectic, busy, or frenetic classroom, but a problem by any other name is still a problem. Instead of a smooth, orderly day, teachers are faced with a myriad of interruptions. Add to this the heterogeneity of learning needs that defines today's average classroom, and we have an environment for learning that is anything but ordered. In other words, teachers face an inordinate amount of unpredictable variety each teaching day, that makes other professions look pale by comparison. The typical mail carrier would, in a matter of hours, go crazy if he or she had to hunt for each person's mailbox, as would the chief executive officer of a company if every day the company changed the business it was in, or the surgeon if he had to operate on aliens from outer space whose
internal organs kept changing. Many of today's teachers face just such a variety, for which no amount of schooling can ever adequately prepare them. Something from within themselves must be dredged up to get through each day. That something, for the effective teacher, is the capacity to meet variety with variety. In other words, for each unexpected event there must be an equally unique response that matches it in intensity and variety. For those teachers who have not learned to create, innovate, and change their behavior in response to the stimulus field, the variety they will face will be far greater than what they can provide.

The characteristic that stops many teachers from creating, innovating, and changing is their own self-imposed fears. These are the same fears of failure often provided by Self 1, which can become self-fulfilling prophecies. These fears take many forms, but for new teachers they often include fears associated with:

- Calling on bright kids
- Having a group discussion
- Being seen as soft
- Being seen as cold
- Stopping a lesson in the middle to review
- Substituting materials at a different level
- Talking about their problems with more experienced peers

These fears and others like them are the imaginary walls to the creative and innovative responses that are needed to meet variety with variety. They are self-limiting barriers that prevent us and our students from growing. Effective teachers have no fears, or, if they have, they will not admit them to themselves or let them get in the way of their potential. They have quieted the judgmental observations of Self 1, and as a result they can make mistakes without self-reproach.

It is not, as commonly thought, that truly effective teachers make no mistakes, or relatively fewer than less effective teachers. This is a difficult point to accept. Both effective and less effective teachers make many errors of judgment-pertaining to, for example, how to handle a behavior problem, proceed at a certain pace, or select an assignment. These mistakes, and many like them, are inevitable in large numbers as a result of the quickly paced, heterogeneous classrooms in which teachers find themselves. Just as in professional athletics, even the best team gets scored on—and some get scored on quite a bit. What separates effective and less effective teachers, more than errors of judgment that abound in every classroom, is the extent to which effective teachers allow themselves to feel their mistakes and to learn from them. The affect image of their actions is remembered by being aware at the highest level of consciousness of the impact of their decisions on students. This is the feeling stage that all good teachers allow themselves to experience.
This feeling stage is the double-edged sword of playfulness. To play at teaching is to be vulnerable, but to be vulnerable is to be open to making those misjudgments you fear the most. This is why so little playfulness, and the vulnerability it requires, is seen in classrooms. It is not because we do not wish to infuse meaning, excitement, and immediacy into our teaching by being playful or that we really have anything against being vulnerable from time to time. It is the fear of what will happen if we are vulnerable that concerns us the most and turns up our numbness amplifiers.

Now we must ask what can be done to break this cycle, so that playfulness and vulnerability can work for you, not against you, to provide the variety of response that effective teaching requires. Part of the answer lies in the choices we often make in attempting to be responsive to student needs.

It is interesting to observe the responses often given by beginning teachers to unanticipated student behavior. If we were to categorize a teacher's response to a student need in terms of its difficulty and effectiveness, four possible alternatives present themselves.

Most student teachers invariably choose responses from quadrants 1 or 4 when confronted with an unanticipated student response. Why? They choose a response from quadrant 1, believing that because it is difficult or complex, it must be more effective than a simpler solution. While the response if properly implemented may be effective, these teachers fail to realize that they do not have the means or will to carry it out. Johnny acts out and so the teacher tells him to come after school for 45 minutes for 5 days. Perhaps Johnny will get the message, but does this teacher want to babysit Johnny for nearly four hours this week? Fear of doing anything less complicated—or less conventional—enters into the decision.

Others will choose a response from quadrant 4. Here the motive is often to be expedient with a well-accepted response that has been used many times.
Johnny may be told simply, "Don't do that," but because Johnny is a repeat offender of the rule, it goes without notice until another expedient but meaningless solution is called up the next time. Teachers sometimes choose a response from this quadrant because they know they must do something, even if its probability for success is not great, and as long as a response must be made, why not choose the easiest?

Teachers shy away from selecting responses from quadrant 2, which are both easy and effective; I have wondered why. Then it occurred to me that something easy that is effective does not come without a price. Something can only be easy and effective if it is unconventional. If it weren't, it wouldn't be effective any longer and therefore would fall into quadrant 4. Here is where fear of being resourceful means being vulnerable-vulnerable to the scary prospects that what is chosen doesn't work or, thanks to Self 1, may even make things worse. This is a bridge many new teachers and some experienced teachers do not choose to cross. In the process they rob themselves of the variety of responses that can meet student needs in a disordered environment far better than the conventional responses handed over by Self 1. Had the teacher been in touch with her feelings, those feelings would have said, "I don't think Johnny's behavior will change as a result of simply saying, "Don't do that." The easiest and most effective responses represent insight—or common sense—that comes naturally and therefore can be implemented with ease. They appear so easy that they are often maligned as shortcuts, sometimes on the grounds that if a solution is not painful to you or the students, it won't work. They are, however, almost always unconventional.

I once saw just such an unconventional approach that was both easy to do and effective while observing several English classes in the same school. The teachers were in the process of assigning a series of short essays when the results of a recently administered standardized test taken by the students came out, indicating below-grade-level achievement in grammar and punctuation. In one class the theme assignments were stopped and a back-to-basics treatment of grammar had begun. The students looked bored stiff; car and movie magazines were conspicuously being read at some of the desks. In an adjacent classroom, the teacher had also stopped the assigned composition unit and had begun a series of drill and practice exercises that required the students to take turns at reciting the rules of punctuation. This class, due to the regimented routine, was more subdued than the first but appeared equally bored. I recall wondering if any of the remedial work would penetrate in the midst of such apparent pain.

The third classroom I visited had a remarkably different air about it, even though it represented the same type of students as the other two. Here the classroom was buzzing with excitement as the kids had just received their essays from an earlier assignment. After visiting the other classrooms, I was surprised that this teacher had decided to continue with the planned unit.
despite the obvious deficiencies that all three teachers had found among their students. Then I noticed that each student's essay had sections that were highlighted in bright yellow-sometimes just phrases, on others whole sentences, and occasionally an entire paragraph. The students were busy reading the highlighted sections of their papers to assigned partners.

It wasn't until after class was over that I learned what this teacher was up to. She had not placed grades on the papers as the students had expected but had traced with a highlighter each phrase, sentence, or paragraph that was free of grammatical or punctuation errors. Every student had some portions highlighted and some naturally had more than others-the feedback to the students was unmistakable. This teacher had turned the tables by highlighting only what was error-free, and she expected students to learn by contrasting their own and partner's highlighted and unhighlighted sections to find the errors. These students were learning what they did right and receiving self-esteem from it to motivate them further in the writing process. The teacher intended to continue using the same approach on the next and subsequent themes, gradually invoking a greater discrimination between highlighted and unhighlighted portions of the papers.

This was a most unconventional approach that appeared both easy and effective. What was most remarkable was that this teacher conquered her fears that the approach would not work or might even backfire, and seemed unconcerned with what the two teachers in adjacent classrooms might think of her approach. This was not a teacher who was exclusively concerned with self or the teaching task. She was focusing on her students and to meet their needs she needed a strategy that was as unconventional as were the grammar and punctuation errors her students were making. This teacher was not afraid to create, innovate, and change to respond to the unanticipated variety occurring around her, no matter who was watching or who would find out.

Characteristic 5

Another characteristic of effective teachers is that they are long-term planners and thinkers. They know what the end results of their work will be, even though dismay, confusion, and disorder may intervene from time to time. Because they have a purpose-know what they believe in-they will undergo almost any amount of immediate discomfort, knowing that in the end they will succeed.

They do this by having a vision of what they hope to accomplish and setting an agenda for capturing the vision in their classrooms. Visions are nothing more than pictures in our heads of the results we wish to achieve. They are home movies of the mind that create for us an ideal state toward which we are willing to work. They are only made possible by having an acute
awareness of purpose—your private reason for teaching—that expresses who you are. Purposes hold the secret to what end you will be satisfied with, if achieved in your classroom.

The trip from purpose to vision need not be long or hard. It involves starting with what some may call pictures in the head. Some of us are afraid to create these pictures, knowing that at the moment they are not real. If Hollywood can do it with something that not only is not real but most likely never will be, why can't we do it for something that may become real? Unlike a trip to the cinema, this picture won't cost us a dime.

Visions are what great performers and athletes instinctively have as part of their training—they picture their success. The true power of a vision was brought home to me once while watching the final round of the Olympic figure skating championships on television. The two top contenders, one a Canadian and the other an American, had gone at it nip and tuck, right until the final round. The American finally won and as is customary, the media interviewed first the Canadian and then the American. The reporter asked each of them how she had trained for this event and if she would have done anything differently. The Canadian said that she would have started training earlier in the season and concentrated more on her weakest movements—a logical response. The American, when asked the same question, said, "I would have created a bigger stadium with more cheering fans." The reporter, a bit dumbfounded by the weird response, groped awkwardly for some clarification. Then the skater explained.

Every time she practiced for the Olympics, before stepping out on the ice she envisioned that she was stepping into a huge, Olympic-sized stadium crammed with cheering crowds—all of whom wanted her to win. She then, step-by-step, envisioned a flawless performance and finally, the final ceremony in which she was given the gold medal. The reporter, who was a skater himself, asked in disbelief how many times she went through this make-believe scene. She answered, "Every single practice session—and there were thousands." "How long did it take?" he asked. "Until I won," was the reply.

What we have here is a vision extraordinary, the importance of which was driven home to millions of people who were watching. She explained that she had so thoroughly implanted a picture of success in her head that a mistake or flaw of any magnitude was unimaginable. The feeling of success—the end result—was so strongly embedded in her every action that for her to involuntarily veer from her envisioned performance was impossible. When questioned about the enormous pressure she must have felt during her final round with the Canadian that night, she said she had experienced that pressure a thousand times before—with each vision. "Tonight was no different," she said, and if she had to change anything during those thousands of practice sessions, she would have made the stadium bigger, crowds larger, and the lights a bit brighter.
Most of us would not have the guts to tell a story like that, particularly if we were on center stage, but we can and often do create such stories in the privacy of our own minds. We naturally envision completing a feat with grace, doing the unattainable before the admiration of a loved one, or bestowing upon ourselves powers we know we do not have. It may have started when we were young and pictured ourselves beating up the bully on the block and winning the admiration of friends, or imagining ourselves on a date with Prince Charming. Without always consciously admitting it, we have kept creating those visions right up to the present. In other words, we are used to imagining success and some of us are quite good at it. The only difference is that effective teachers are conscious of their visions and create them with purpose. Like the Olympic skater, they are at the center of their own attention, and although their visions may be less elaborate and frequent than those of the gold medalist, they are every bit as real.

The visions of success that effective teachers report, while many and varied, are always connected to their purposes. For example, how might you envision success with one or more of the following purposes:

To redirect misbehavior without using punishment

To teach personal living habits not taught in the home

To teach mastery of the basics to a student, regardless of ability

To encourage independent thinking by taking adversarial positions

To model maturity and responsibility with actual classroom incidents

To make a difference in one

To be sure, it is hard to imagine success for purposes that may not be your own, but it can be done more easily than you think. Read these purposes again, pausing after each to picture a scene in a classroom that matches. What kind of event must be brought center stage to indicate that some success is being achieved? Start by creating a snapshot involving a single student or event and then, if necessary, start the film rolling to create a moving image. Picture how a child's misbehavior is being corrected with the gentle voice of a nurturant teacher, what a classroom of latchkey children would look like if each had an ideal home life, how a low-ability student would look when accurately calculating his bill at a convenience store, what a classroom would be like that encouraged the expression of contradictory viewpoints, what classroom incident could be used to model maturity and responsibility, and what the expression on one student's face would be when he realizes his life has been changed because of you.

Once started, little images can become the basis for scenarios that can picture your success. They are a way of summarizing in a concise manner the end result you are shooting for, without immediately entangling you in the details. Once a vision, however idealized it may be, is finally established
for each of your purposes, it can be recalled at any time to remind you of your goal. It also is a check on the appropriateness of the means you select to achieve your goal. In a sense, visions help us to manage our attention—keep us on the track to fulfilling the things we are about most. In classrooms filled with disruptions and distractions, this may be one of the most important reasons for having vision.

**Characteristic 6**

Our final characteristic is the importance successful teachers place on their relationships with others. Successful teachers extol rather than shun relationships. They are team players. For this they have conquered their egos. For them schools are too important to use as personal battlegrounds for bolstering themselves at the expense of students, colleagues, parents, and administrators.

A primary part of this attitude is the kind of relationships they create with their students. Their students are not adversaries or even acquaintances, but partners in the mutual process of growth and development, growing and developing in different ways, but nevertheless experiencing the same sense of excitement that comes from the growth process. To an objective observer many schools are indistinguishable from each other, but the relationship of teachers to students always makes a school stand out to parents, to administrators, and to even the casual observer.

This is not to say that successful teachers spend their time wiping noses, accepting feeble excuses, and sharpening pencils for their students. These are very often the maneuverings of Stage 1 teachers who feel so threatened by their students that they believe they must win the students over at almost any cost. Behind their sometimes nurturant behavior is often an adversarial attitude driven by a strong and unremitting concern for self. These tactics sometimes are used to win over the enemy, thus rendering him impotent in the battle for self-survival. Kids know better, and many see the adversarial relationship that lies behind these behaviors.

Other teachers, particularly those at Stage 2, whose concerns are directed toward the teaching task, often see their students as acquaintances to be used in the process of carrying out their instructional duties, which they may do in a rigidly organized manner. Their students are empty vessels into which they pour the day's lesson, with the expectation that all will receive the content and at some future time and at the convenience of the teacher, will pour it back on a test, exercise, or homework assignment. Their students are the vehicles that allow them mechanically to carry out their duties and in the process they necessarily see their students as machines that must absorb and play back the course content. Thus, there is always a business-like and unapproachable distance between them and their students, regardless of their students' need for any other kind of relationship.
Teachers who have reached Stage 3 have a different type of relationship with their students. Since their primary concern is with their impact on students, they must necessarily get to know their students—their interests, abilities, learning styles, and individual strengths and weaknesses for a particular subject or grade. These teachers know their impact will, in part, always be dependent upon how they adjust their level of instruction, learning resources, and teaching to accommodate both individual learning needs and the overall needs of their class. They also are aware that learning needs continually change as students, course content, and objectives change.

This is in stark contrast to the task orientation of a Stage 2 teacher who is on cruise control most of his or her professional life. Since adjustments in content or approach would upset the status quo, such teachers ride the well-worn grooves of past years, establishing their control—of the students, the curriculum, and their place in the school—by being highly organized.

Stage 3 teachers, on the other hand, allow their students to see them as friends—someone who knows something about them and who cares—even if the same cannot always be returned in kind by the student. This friendship is of a very special kind.

The key to our use of the word “friendship” is not how the teacher views his or her students but how the student views his or her teacher. Successful teachers allow their students to see them as friends, although they are acutely aware of the difference in authority and status that must be maintained in the context of their instructional goals. Whether they become friends with their students is not the point—and many successful teachers understandably choose not to, just as anyone in adult life would want to have the opportunity to choose his or her friends. It’s the view from the perspective of the student that counts for the successful teacher, who always protects the dominant-subordinate context necessary to achieving the instructional goals of a classroom. How does the successful teacher manage this delicate balance?

The secret lies in their ability to be seen as both warm and in control. Many teachers believe that they must choose one of these alternatives or the other, since in their minds, to be warm and controlling would be a contradiction. In other words, they see that where they want to be represents incompatible points in the two different dimensions represented below.

![Diagram](image-url)
Since being at one point precludes being at the other, we choose between them. The Stage 1 teacher who has a high level of concern toward self often uses warmth to be liked and perhaps obeyed, and gives up control. The Stage 2 teacher who has a high level of concern for the teaching task chooses control and gives up warmth, creating in the process a rigid organization that fosters the status quo.

For many years, the dimensions of warmth and control were seen as opposite ends of the same continuum. For example, a teacher who was accepting of student ideas and allowed spontaneity of expression would be referred to as warm. A teacher who was critical of student ideas and allowed little spontaneity or freedom of choice would be referred to as cold.

Can a teacher be in control and warm at the same time? To find out how successful teachers accomplish this, let's depict warmth and control in the following manner.

These axes suggest that different degrees of warmth and control may occur simultaneously, and that behavior on one axis does not necessarily control behavior on the other. Although many combinations of warmth and control are possible, four major profiles emerge from this conception of the classroom (Soar & Soar, 1983).

The first is represented by quadrant A, in which the teacher may be characterized as cold and controlling. A teacher who falls at the upper left corner of this quadrant is one who may humiliate and criticize students to control all aspects of their behavior. Lesser extremes represent a teacher who provides little praise or reward. This quadrant generally represents a classroom climate that is businesslike and almost always task-oriented, with few interchanges with students that are not initiated by the teacher. It also may be a classroom in which motivation for high-level work is inspired more by a
fear of punishment, embarrassment, or, in extreme cases, humiliation than by the expectation of praise, reward, or reinforcement.

A second type of classroom is represented by quadrant B, in which the teacher is warm but in control. If warmth were to be seen as independent of control, this quadrant would appear as a contradiction that could not occur in practice. On close examination, however, high degrees of both warmth and control can exist simultaneously. A teacher who falls at the upper right corner of this quadrant would be one who associates almost every desirable student behavior with some expectation of reward. The result may well be an almost suffocating climate in which students have little if any room to pursue a behavior or activity on their own. Only those behaviors that have been previously identified by the teacher are eligible for a reward—all others are presumably less worthy. This may create a classroom climate in which students have little freedom to pursue any independent behavior because of the tightly managed praise and reward system established by the teacher. A lesser extreme and more desirable portion of this quadrant would represent a classroom that balances rewards and independence, thus promoting a climate of both warmth and control. This quadrant differs primarily from quadrant A in that motivation for good behavior comes from a well-defined and consistently applied system of praise and rewards. In quadrant A, good behavior results from a well-defined and consistently applied system of rules and/or punishment.

A third classroom is characterized by quadrant C, in which the teacher is warm and permissive. A teacher who falls at the lower right corner of this quadrant is one who praises and rewards students frequently, while providing students almost complete freedom in choosing the limits of their own behavior, sometimes resulting in chaos or confusion. A lesser extreme might represent a classroom in which praise and rewards are apparent, but student spontaneity (for example, calling out) and risk-taking behavior are limited to certain times (group discussion, problem-solving activities) or certain types of material (for example, social studies but not math). During these times, the teacher acts more as a moderator or participant, guiding and directing but not controlling classroom behavior. This quadrant might be characterized as a classroom climate in which students have considerable freedom in how and when to speak, and in which the teacher's warm and nurturing attitude toward students is conveyed mostly nonverbally through a mutually agreed upon set of classroom rules.

The fourth quadrant represents a classroom that is cold and permissive. A teacher who falls at the lower left corner of this quadrant might be one who spends most of the time scolding and criticizing students, but who has few classroom rules to control or limit the behavior being criticized. Such an extreme climate sometimes prevails in a classroom that must suddenly be taught by a substitute teacher. In these classrooms, selected students may
take the teacher's unfamiliarity with classroom rules as an opportunity to act out, thereby initiating scolding or criticizing teacher behavior. Since the classroom rules normally in place are unknown to the teacher, there are no rules to fall back on to prevent misbehavior from continually recurring. Since the substitute's role is to keep order, not to create or discover rules, much of his or her behavior is an attempt to hold the line by criticizing, reprimanding, and punishing, if need be, to keep the class under control. A less extreme position in this quadrant might be characterized by some coverage of content as a result of student-initiated responses, interspersed with periodic delays for classroom management and misbehavior. This quadrant may be characterized by a lack of task orientation and teacher control over the subject-matter content, and a high frequency of scolding, criticizing, and reprimanding.

Teachers who properly position themselves in quadrant B allow themselves to be seen as friends by their students, creating the context for a relationship in which learning can occur. This relationship defines that critical point in the learning curve in which a student's heart must be opened to a relationship before the mind can be opened to learning. Without a genuine relationship between student and teacher, classrooms will increasingly be filled with students who remain passive and uncommitted even to their own future. Indeed, this has already become a familiar sight in many of our urban schools, where the effects of rapid cycles of value change and a disordered environment are already being felt by increasing numbers of youth who remain uncommitted to learning for most of their school years.

For the successful teacher, warmth and control are not independent of each other. They realize that each needs the other to be effective in promoting the context in which learning can occur. They know that warmth without control is not warmth at all but chaos and confusion, and control without warmth is not control but tyranny. The secret of combining the two lies with a model for teaching in today's large, heterogeneous classrooms, a topic to which we now turn.
The previous chapter identified some of the characteristics of successful teachers. They included the important role that purpose, nonjudgmental observation, values, change, and relationships play in the lives of successful teachers. In this chapter we will explore what successful teachers do with these characteristics in their classrooms. We will see how their teaching typically differs from less-effective teachers and how they operate in today's changing classroom.

Although we seldom think about it, many of the teaching techniques that most of us have been taught to use work best with small groups. For now, let's define "small" as a classroom of 20 or fewer students with relatively homogeneous abilities, previous academic histories, and achievement.

Unfortunately, these tried-and true small group techniques-most dating from the early part of this century-don't work in many of today's large, heterogeneous, and culturally diverse classrooms-in which most teachers are assigned to work. The problem is not that they are outdated--or most teachers wouldn't be using them and textbooks wouldn't be written about them. Their inadequacy is that they work effectively only with small, homogeneous groups of students. Because we have made the inaccurate assumption that what works on a small scale will automatically work on a large one, many teachers have come to assume that these traditional techniques are equally valid in every type of classroom. The fact of the matter is-and some teachers have already discovered this-what works in small, homogeneous classrooms can actually impair a teacher's effectiveness in a large, heterogeneous classroom. Let's see why.

For years teachers have been given a model of an effective lesson that included most, if not all, of the following:

- Gaining attention
- Stating the objective
- Checking for prerequisite learning
- Presenting content
• Guiding the student to a response
• Providing independent practice
• Testing and/or feedback

The models that use these steps to encourage a systematic and logical lesson may be anything but systematic and logical in large, heterogeneous classrooms. Idealized lesson plan models continue to be defended by many, but the successful teacher knows when not to use them—and many use them very little as a guide to lesson planning in large, heterogeneous classrooms.

Consider a small, homogeneous class of learners from predominantly white middle-class families who themselves were educated in small, homogeneous classrooms. It is not the homogeneity that makes these classes so amenable to a model lesson plan, but the lack of variety that such homogeneity implies. This model lesson works in these classrooms because it is about as variety-free as the classroom of learners to which it will be applied. In other words, there is a predictable match between student responses and teacher reactions. Both are confined by limits acknowledged by the other side. There is an equilibrium: What one side gives, the other, with minor exceptions, accepts. Since value systems are at parity, there are few surprises, and, if any do occur, they can be handled by the rules (values) the students, their parents, and the teacher are committed to accept. This is the model of a classroom that most beginning teachers are taught.

In some respects we live in an orderly society in which the rules of the game ensure that the same responses will be available to all participants. The sporting events we see on television and participate in ourselves are no exception. One rule accepted by the participants is that there will be an equal number of players on each side. Football, basketball, and baseball play the rule, without exception. What does this rule provide? It provides an equality or balance that allows for the action to unfold in an orderly manner. In another sense, it limits the variety that can be imposed by either side—one side may have taller or heavier players, but it can’t have more players.

In our daily lives we see many such instances of contained variety and often come to expect such limitations in our own behavior. Such containment also exists in the classroom, but unfortunately it may be much more unbalanced, due to the different value systems operating within the context of the same game. Students can and do choose what rules they wish to follow at any given time, often injecting more variety than wished for or anticipated by the teacher. Student receptivity and responsiveness to the goals of instruction add still more variety that the rules of the game cannot contain. In other words, our classrooms are becoming a far cry from the orderly game of teaching and learning to which learners of 20 or 30 years ago brought their homogeneous values. Today, some classrooms are more like a football game.
in which one team decides to use more players than the other, or a baseball player who decides to use a heavier bat, or a basketball player who climbs on the shoulders of another to make a shot. If we were watching these events on television, we would shout out, "Incredible," "Not fair," "That's not supposed to happen." However, just such incredible, not-fair, not-supposed-to-happen responses occur every day, sometimes many times a day, in our nation's classrooms. Rapid cycles of value change have intervened to create a variety of action and response that would have been unthinkable at the turn of the century, when many of today's teaching techniques were being developed. The game has changed and the umpires are helpless to bring us back to the good old days.

It may now be clear why many of our models of teaching have become poor guides to successful teaching in many of our large urban schools. They assume a static classroom with more or less predictable responses dictated by a universal set of rules by which all the players abide. They implicitly instruct teachers to be less responsive to the stimulus field that is presenting the variety to which teachers must ultimately respond. The teacher's concentration is confined by a model that cannot easily accommodate playfulness, flow, and affect to increase the variety that may be necessary to match that being delivered from the stimulus field.

From Chapter 2 one might gain the impression that all is not well with today's schools, but this does not mean that teaching in them may become futile or even necessarily more difficult than it has been in the past. On the contrary, what this projection reveals is that the game of teaching and learning is changing, that all the teaching and learning that needs to occur in schools today can occur, if we recognize that the rules are changing. The new rules are being felt the most in large, heterogeneous classes influenced by rapid cycles of value change. In other words, the notion of a disordered school environment applies only within the context of the old rules and the teaching methods they brought into being. Change the environment or the rules (for example, to rules more relevant to large, heterogeneous classrooms) and the disorder might not be present.

As noted in Chapter 3, disorder in the universe as well as in the classroom tends to provide the variety needed for change. It provides us with the opportunity for new responses and alternatives that promote growth in the truest sense of the word. Thus, a rapid increase in variety and disorder go hand in hand, the former encouraging the new responses and alternatives necessary for change to a new and better state. It is variety, then, that is needed to return us to a more ordered instructional environment—a type of variety that must be responsive to the variety provided by learners in large, heterogeneous classrooms.

So far we have made a distinction between small and large classrooms, the former representing homogeneous learning needs and student values. As
we have seen, tomorrow's classrooms and many of today's represent relatively large numbers of learners with heterogeneous learning needs and values. This heterogeneity is not only a product of a larger, more culturally complex classroom, but also one that quickly absorbs the rapid cycles of value change that come from outside the classroom. Let's look more closely at each of these types of classrooms to learn what it is about them that makes them so different for teachers.

Sociologists have studied the behavior of different-sized groups for many years. From their efforts we have learned a great deal that is applicable to the classroom. One of the most important outcomes from these studies of the performance of small and large groups is that the pressure to perform from outside the group will have different effects on a small group than on a large one. At the center of this finding is the sociological definition of "press." In small classes "press" (e.g., rules, authority, routine, curriculum) is more easily imposed from outside the stimulus field than it is in large classes. This makes for fewer decisions and fewer unanticipated responses. The pressure to perform comes from the structure (classroom setting) and the routine (teaching model) that works to make for the teacher many of the decisions that otherwise might be necessary. Commitment to learn on the part of learners, which comes later, is not needed at the outset of instruction, since the structure and routine are sufficient to direct behavior in the most desirable way. In small, homogeneous classes there is a group mind that readily takes and often looks for direction from outside the group itself, this direction being provided by the teacher, classroom setting, and teaching model.

Large, heterogeneous groups—composed of individuals with different learning needs, values, and purposes—behave quite differently. Here there are more potential decision-makers and less consensus as to the role of structure and routine in securing a commitment to learn. Large groups, especially those that are heterogeneous, look more to themselves, individually and collectively, to make decisions than do smaller, more homogeneous groups. They tend to be more purposeful, and internally guided and to want to think for themselves. In larger groups each individual more readily assumes the power of others—thereby accumulating strength and willfulness. Members of larger groups report a loss of individuality and an anonymity that is made up for by action independent of the teacher, classroom setting, and teaching model.

Every teacher has at one time or another felt the dramatic difference between a class of 20 and one of 30. Some classrooms today have as many as 35 learners. With the beginning of a nationwide teacher shortage, increasing enrollments at the elementary school level, and shrinking school budgets, larger classes are likely to be a recurring part of the educational landscape for some time to come, despite research that has advocated the contrary.
Although seemingly small, a difference of only 10 students has a large impact on classroom discipline, individual learning needs, and instructional pacing. Add to this the variety of cultural patterns, values, and learning histories, and we have a much different classroom with 30 learners than with 20 learners, which was the size of the typical class when many of today's teaching techniques were first developed.

It is, of course, not just the number of students in a class that makes the difference, as some research has mistakenly emphasized, but the heterogeneity that increased size brings with it and the added demands that are placed on the backs of teachers. This makes for a social system that may and many times does create more variety than any single model of lesson presentation can represent. It also creates a depth of variety that cannot be readily anticipated by the teacher from either textbook learning or teaching experience. In these large-group settings, learners become more willful decision makers-looking out for their own needs and, finding them unmet, looking elsewhere. This situation represents the difficult-to-control nature of some inner-city classrooms in which a large number of new teachers find themselves. However, as we have seen, many of these same conditions are being found in suburban schools as well, where working parents, jobs, peers, and easy access to adult lifestyles create a student profile almost indistinguishable from the cultural diversity of many urban schools.

The successful teacher instinctively knows the difference between a smaller, homogeneous class and a larger, heterogeneous one. Many teach in only the latter and therefore have long ago set aside those approaches best suited for the smaller, homogeneous class in which they were educated. Let's examine what successful teachers do in large, heterogeneous classrooms to create the necessary variety and responsiveness to the stimulus field.

Most instructional events included in today's models of lesson planning could comfortably be included in the following:

1. Gaining attention
2. Stating the objective
3. Presenting the instruction
4. Obtaining a response

Substitute the following for these four, and you will have a formula for success that works in larger, heterogeneous classrooms:

1. Setting the tone
2. Establishing the need
3. Demonstrating capability
4. Obtaining a commitment

Let's examine each to see how they differ from typical lesson plans in small, homogeneous classrooms.
Setting the Tone

Even the casual observer notices differences in the atmosphere or climate of classrooms. More often than not, this atmosphere is established at the beginning of each lesson through attention-gaining techniques, which together with the teacher's demeanor, verbal tone, and facial expressions set the climate that is to prevail for that lesson or day. There are, however, several other important ingredients for establishing a climate for learning; these are not always obvious to an observer and sometimes not even to the teacher.

First, it can be said that setting the tone has nothing to do with attention-gaining devices, with which it can be confused. Gaining attention through any number of techniques, from clapping hands at the start of the lesson to piquing student interest with visuals or questions, are attempts to focus student attention. Such techniques may work in small, homogeneous classes, but they are often resisted by students in large, heterogeneous ones. There, they are seen for what they are-attempts to control. Students in large, heterogeneous classes usually are uninspired by them, since they are not ready to pass control to someone to whom they are not yet fully committed. Their behavior is more independent and willful at the start of a lesson, since the structure of a classroom and teacher's routine are not sufficient to secure their commitment, as they might be in a smaller, more homogeneous class of learners.

What transpires in the first few minutes of class is important. If the teacher's attention is on the stimulus field, the teacher will recognize that some and perhaps many students do not wish to give up their independence and willfulness. In other words, the teacher recognizes that the students perceive themselves as decision makers, and it is unlikely that any momentary attention-gaining device is going to invoke a subordinate state that they may not want to enter. So what does the successful teacher do?

The teacher sets the tone by acknowledging that his or her students are decision makers who also bring some authority, independence, and willfulness to the classroom, just as does the teacher. Students in large, heterogeneous classrooms know this from the start, even at young ages and even if the teacher does not. They know they can shut out the teacher at any point, passively attend without complying, or create a disturbance that prevents others from learning. If a tone is not set at the outset to invite students to commit themselves to the instructional goals of the classroom, they will exercise their authority, independence, and willfulness in other ways. The key to setting the tone is to create a beginning that encourages students to commit their authority in ways that are conducive to the goals of your classroom. In other words, your goals must voluntarily become their goals without taking away the independence and willfulness they know they have. How is this done? For successful teachers of large, heterogeneous classes, it begins by
acknowledging student strengths and concerns. Strengths and concerns, as we will see, are two sides of the same coin. They are the vehicles by which the teacher establishes warmth and purpose and thereby sets a tone that voluntarily gains the commitment of learners to listen to, think about, and eventually act upon the content of the lesson.

How many times have you begun your classes by informing students of what they don’t know rather than what they do know? "Let's begin by going over what you've missed on the homework.” "You haven't learned this, so let's begin there.” These are familiar openers in many classrooms. Remarks such as these often unintentionally create fear or anxiety that place many students in a passive, non-compliant mode for the remainder of the day or lesson. They provide students just the excuse for not voluntarily committing themselves to the goals of the lesson and sometimes for using their authority, independence, and willfulness to achieve objectives contrary to the lesson. In other words, successful teachers of large, heterogeneous classes begin by informing their students what they have learned, accomplished thus far, or successfully mastered.

Achievements should be followed by acknowledging the concerns of learners. This is a time to find out by asking what students feel are their weaknesses, reflected in their concerns and anxieties. Concerns are those things we feel uncertain of, fearful of, or anxious about. They may be vague and emotional, but they are the vehicles that convey a responsiveness to students that preserves their authority, independence, and willfulness. Now the learners are informing the teacher of their learning needs, not the opposite. Conveying weaknesses takes authority away from the learner, but the expression of concerns gives authority and recognition to the learner. The tables are turned and the momentum of the classroom is working for, not against, the teacher. Also, the students are being recognized as decision makers who are regulating and participating to some extent in their own learning.

Setting the tone can also be accomplished by posing questions. One type of question that is often helpful in setting a tone conducive to learning in large, heterogeneous classes is the situation question. Situation questions collect facts, information, and background about the learners' understanding of and concerns about the topic. They seek out strengths but also try to uncover concerns and anxieties that can become detrimental to learning. Situation questions introduce the topic and, because they elicit from the learner information that cannot be evaluated as either right or wrong, they are nonjudgmental.

Some sample situation questions that can help establish a warm and purposeful climate might be:

- What is one of your most common errors in punctuation?
  (From a lesson on punctuating possessives)
Situation questions attempt to explain through the students' own responses the value of the lesson in *their* language and from *their* point of view. When the students feel their ideas are part of the lesson, they will be more likely to talk about the content and feel enthusiasm for it. The objective of a situation question is to open the lesson and provide the necessary background, after which the teacher moves on to other types of questions.

**Establishing the Need**

A second stage of lesson planning for large, homogeneous classes is establishing a need. This involves finding out something about the learners that relates to your lesson. It means getting the learners to perceive the importance of what is about to be taught in terms of their, not the teacher's, world.

In small, homogeneous classrooms, stating the objective—or the behavior to be expected—can sometimes suffice for need. In many of these classrooms the individual learner readily equates personal need with teacher goals. If the teacher says it's important by making it the goal of the lesson then students think, "I must need it." Learners in large, heterogeneous classrooms rarely buy this reasoning, because the structure of the classroom and routine of the teacher is not sufficient for learners to give up their independence and willfulness. If learners were to submit readily to the dominant-subordinate structure of the classroom, teachers might expect learners to profit from knowing in advance what will be taught and what will be expected of them. However, to expect this is, for all intents and purposes, to command, and commands are given with the expectation that students will give up their independence and willfulness. Some students in large, heterogeneous classrooms are unwilling to exchange their needs for what, to them, are the needs of the teacher or school. In large, heterogeneous classes it is not the teacher's needs that must be made salient, but the needs of the students.

This is a tricky proposition—substituting kid needs for teacher needs. It even sounds like a revisit to the style of the 1970s, in which some believed that the teacher's role was to produce a happy learner by reinterpreting the
curriculum to fit learner interests or, in extreme cases, to let students decide for themselves what should be taught.

In large, heterogeneous classrooms, the aim is not to alter or reinterpret the curriculum according to student interests, but to illuminate student interests so that they relate to the curriculum. In other words, it is student perceptions about the curriculum that are changed, not the curriculum. Let's examine what this means for large, heterogeneous classrooms.

Attempts to redefine the curriculum to suit student interests in years past did a disservice to both students and the curriculum. These efforts said, on the one hand, that many students were incapable of grasping the traditional curriculum, at least as it had been taught, and, on the other hand, that the traditional curriculum had lost or was losing its relevance in today's classrooms. As a result, much school curriculum was rewritten to a form that expected less not more of students, culminating in a noticeable nationwide decline in standardized achievement scores, which in turn promoted many of the rigid reforms schools and teachers are facing today.

The alternative, that neither the curriculum nor the student was the problem, was not given much consideration. Successful teachers of large, heterogeneous classrooms discovered that the answer may lie elsewhere. They found that their curriculum could come alive without doing surgery on the curriculum itself or reinterpreting it in terms of lower expectations for their learners. They found that more, not less, could be asked of their learners and that much of the traditional curriculum is as relevant today as it was in the past. The missing element for large, heterogeneous classrooms was relevance. The relevance of course content to the needs of today's learners was not made explicit in curriculum guides or in student texts and workbooks. This was the unique role of the successful teacher in large, heterogeneous classrooms, and one their less-successful counterparts were not willing to assume. The successful teachers' role was to create a context for instruction that made course content and their students' ability to comprehend it relevant.

The vehicle with which these teachers accomplished this was by establishing a need in the context of a problem that was relevant to their learners' world. Strangely enough, these teachers did not believe their students were getting dumber, as the standardized test scores suggested, or that the traditional curriculum was becoming outmoded. On the contrary, their students were considered as capable as ever of assimilating complex ideas and a curriculum that was more universal and applicable to today's problems than had been thought.

For the successful teacher the bridge between learner and content is made by presenting course content in the context of problems that relate to real or perceived student needs. However, getting students to perceive the need or importance of what is to be taught is no small accomplishment. As we have seen, simply stating the objective may be sufficient in small,
homogeneous classrooms, but it seldom is sufficient in large, heterogeneous classrooms. This is not to say that successful teachers of large, heterogeneous classes do not have objectives. They do, and very often many of them are stated in formal ways. It happens that they know the difference between their objectives, which for the most part may be irrelevant to their students, and a problem that illuminates a perceived need to provide a relevant context for learning by their students.

In large, heterogeneous classrooms problems replace objectives. Problems are the lifeblood of today's society, and there is no reason why they can not be the centerpiece of every lesson to accentuate, clarify, and even create needs. Needs, then, are to learners what objectives are to teachers. Each represents the common theme of a lesson but from different perspectives.

In large, heterogeneous classrooms needs can be established by posing problem questions. Problems create needs, and where there are needs, there is a context for learning that supports student independence and willfulness in a decision-making context. These are the special ingredients that can encourage a commitment to learn in large, heterogeneous classrooms. Problem questions raise difficulties and contradictions that point to a need that may not have been obvious. They make explicit needs that beforehand were only implicit in the situation or context, by illuminating contradictions or irregularities that call for the creation of a solution, a will to act or change. Problems and the irregularities and asymmetries they bring to light are inherently interesting to students. They are why experienced teachers move with haste from situation to problem questions after an initial period of discovery and self-disclosure. "Trouble" is what learners like, since their own world is so often marked by it. Problem questions spell out the trouble in a particular situation or context.

Although problem questions are also related to successful teaching in smaller, homogeneous classrooms, they become an essential part of effective teaching as classes grow larger and more heterogeneous. So important are problem questions in large, heterogeneous classes that teachers who are not proficient in composing them have considerable difficulty in holding the attention of their classes. Interestingly, few questioning strategies mention problem questions and fewer, if any, teacher appraisals acknowledge their usefulness for establishing the relevance of the goals of the classroom to the world outside it.

Here are some sample problem questions to help establish the relevance of lesson content by introducing an irregularity or contradiction:

- If someone were to see written "Mr. Burns nurse," how would the reader know whether the man's name is Burn or Burns?
  (From a lesson on the punctuation of possessives)
• If someone were to mix air, fire, and gasoline together to produce power, how might its destructive forces be controlled?
  (From a lesson on energy)

• How did the North American continent become inhabited if, as many scientists believe, human life actually began in Africa?
  (From a lesson on world geography)

• If democracy means freedom, then why are we not free to do as we please in our own democracy?

We will return to these questions shortly in the context of a real lesson. For now, let's summarize the first two ingredients for teaching a lesson in a large, heterogeneous classroom.

So far we have discussed the special role of setting the tone and establishing a need in large, heterogeneous classrooms. Setting the tone was accomplished by establishing warmth and purpose through acknowledging student strengths and concerns. Needs were established by posing problems that make lesson content relevant. We will now discuss two other ingredients of successful teaching in large, heterogeneous classrooms: demonstrating capability and obtaining commitment.

**Demonstrating Capability**

In the large, heterogeneous classroom the successful teacher must demonstrate to learners his or her capability. This may seem to be a strange addition to any model of teaching, since it shifts the spotlight away from the learner and places it on the teacher. However, those who teach regularly in these classrooms will recognize the need for the teacher to show and often prove his or her capability to students. Notice how unnecessary this might be in a small, homogeneous classroom in which the structure and routine of the classroom alone might be sufficient to command student attention and respect. In large, heterogeneous classrooms respect and the attention that follows are not won so easily. The mere presence of the teacher working in the classroom, behind the desk, or at the chalkboard does not guarantee sufficient commitment from students for learning to occur, as the noise level, acting-out behavior, and number of disengaged students in some large, heterogeneous classrooms attests.

What is the reason for this? Although there are many, among the most salient is that the teachers in these classrooms have confused presenting course content-delivering the lesson-with demonstrating capability. The former requires the teacher to present the content and activities of a lesson dictated by a curriculum guide or text, and the latter requires the teacher to prove
his or her competence with content and activities that go *beyond* those in the text. This is often the difference, in the minds of learners, between being taught and being challenged. It also is the difference between backing up words with actions and feats of competence that convey a model for the behavior that is expected of students.

Here is yet another difference between homogeneous and heterogeneous classrooms. In the former, learners are expected to become engaged in the learning process by being shown a correct response or given a procedure for finding it; in the latter, the correct response must be demonstrated or procedure followed in the context of an actual problem that is seen as challenging to both students and teacher. In other words, in large, heterogeneous classrooms the teacher cannot simply present but must perform—and perform with tasks and problems that challenge the students' capabilities to respond in a like manner.

If this sounds like a teacher who must show his or her muscle, you are right. The muscle cannot be shown just for the sake of muscle-ego-inflating maneuvers that may be impressive but peripheral to the goals of the lesson. They must be directed toward the same cognitive processes, activities, and responses that will be expected of learners, not only at the end of the lesson but in the world outside the classroom. In this sense, demonstrating capability is previewing what the learner can and should be able to do in your classroom and in life.

This is what any good coach does, for the same reasons we are discussing. Regardless of age or experience, the coach throws the ball, swings the bat, or simulates a tackle, not only to model the behavior but to demonstrate his or her own capability in performing the actions expected of players. How silly it would be to the players if the coach never touched the ball or got any closer to the game than talking about it to the players. The players would lose respect for the coach or at least would quietly doubt his or her competence or love for the sport.

In the classroom there is no other place learners can turn when they doubt the capability of the authority at hand. In fact, in many classrooms in which capability is rarely shown, students typically tune out the teacher just as they tune out any peer they believe does not have the capability to back up his or her words with real actions and deeds. This is the world students live in and come to respect, in and out of the classroom, with peers as well as teachers. In small, homogeneous classrooms learners can be cajoled into accepting seatwork or being talked at for long periods of time. The discordant value systems operating in large, heterogeneous classrooms will not accept authority without substance and suspecting a lack of competence or an unwillingness to risk any display of it, students will quickly disengage from the learning task. This is one of the best arguments for the increased subject matter emphasis now being required at many teacher training institutions.
It is sometimes difficult to appreciate the fine line between talking and doing. In fact, in many classrooms talking is often mistaken for doing. In these classrooms recitation of rules, following the text, carrying out procedures, and even working through examples are substitutes for demonstrating a teacher's capability in a more real, lifelike, and less predictable environment. That calls for stretching beyond the immediate confines of text or workbook to perform the complex actions, interpretations, problem-solving activities, and decisions that may be required not only at the end of a designated period of instruction but in the world outside the classroom. It means not hiding behind the exercises students may be expected to complete but going beyond them to create lifelike and challenging problems that require a high level of performance.

Most Stage 1 teachers, concerned primarily with self, and some Stage 2 teachers, concerned primarily with task, seldom demonstrate capability to their learners. Stage 1 teachers often avoid performances of almost any kind out of fear of a less than exemplary performance, and often prefer that their students do all the performing by reciting from workbooks and prepared exercises, to which the teacher simply comments "right" or "wrong," or provides the answer from the text. This is not demonstrating capability, since most learners could find the right answer themselves if they had a commitment to do so. This has only demonstrated that the teacher has read the assignment and that some of the students have not.

Stage 2 teachers also often avoid demonstrating capability, as they give extraordinary attention to organizing the teaching task. These teachers display many carefully crafted exercises, notecards, visuals, problem sets, and handouts, all of which provide practice in the rote responses of a task. These are all highly commendable earmarks of a good teacher, but due to their predictable formula, they do not place the teacher at sufficient risk in the eyes of the students to demonstrate capability and, as such, to engage them in the learning task.

An important vehicle for demonstrating capability is to go beyond the presentation of course content to show its implications. Implications are more abstract than content and therefore provide the opportunity for the teacher to use cognitive processes that may not have been obvious to students. Implications also serve to illustrate the relevance of lesson content to a world that may be more meaningful to students than is the classroom. The posing and answering of questions that encourage, even force, that implications be made from learned content is often an effective way to demonstrate capability that goes beyond the rote mechanics of a response. The teacher's role in formulating and providing implications is to demonstrate higher cognitive processes to students and thereby demonstrate his or her own capability.

Most experienced teachers do a reasonably good job of asking situation and problem questions. Unfortunately, that is where most of their
questioning stops. In small, homogeneous classrooms a teacher may be successful by posing only situation and problem questions. In these classrooms the need to believe a problem is real is of less importance for engaging students in the learning process than is the structure and routine of the classroom. Teachers of large, heterogeneous classrooms have a different problem. Their learners are not so likely to accept the structure and routine of the classroom without becoming a part of it in some meaningful way. That is, they will retain some degree of independence and willfulness, despite the rules of the classroom, until they too are recognized as decision makers and contributors to the goals of the classroom. For learners in small, homogeneous classrooms, the needs implicit in problem questions are sufficient to attract and focus their attention. In many of these classrooms, if the teacher says it's a problem, the learners accept it as a problem, without having the effect or implication of the problem demonstrated. Here is a typical interchange limited to only situation and problem questions:

*Teacher: (situation question)* Who knows how the early inhabitants of the North American continent got here?

*Student: They were born here.*

*Teacher: (problem question)* What if, as many scientists believe, human life actually began in Africa?

*Student: (implied need)* I guess, then, the early inhabitants of North America would have had to have traveled here somehow.

*Teacher: (offering a solution)* Many scientists believe that they came across the Bering Strait between what is now Alaska and Russia, when those two land masses were connected by ice and snow.

*Student: Wow, that must have been quite a journey.*

*Teacher: Yes, it must have been a difficult journey and must have taken a very long time.*

*Student: Just to come to America!*

What has happened here? The teacher establishes a need that posed a dilemma, contradiction, or irregularity that caught the student's attention and that related to the content of the lesson. The student readily discerned the problem, that, if not born on our continent, how did the first humans reach North America? The dilemma was unmistakable, which the student repeated in the form of an implication—a method must have existed that would have allowed the movement of people between continents. It was at this point that the teacher stopped the inquiry by providing a plausible solution—the frozen traverse
between Alaska and Russia. In many small, homogeneous classrooms this interchange might have worked to engage learners in the content of the lesson. The implied need for a solution to the dilemma was provided and the authority vested in the structure and routine of the classroom made it plausible to the learners, even without their seeing the implications for themselves. These learners were content not to be decision makers and readily gave up their independence and willfulness to the authority of the teacher. In larger, heterogeneous classrooms, however, situation and problem questions alone are not sufficient to commit students to the goals of the lesson. In these classrooms, what should the teacher do?

It is here that implication questions become important to success in the classroom. Let's see how an experienced teacher might have used implication questions to develop and further extend student commitment to the learning process before offering a solution. Let's pick up again with the student's restatement of the problem posed by the teacher:

Student: (implied need) I guess, then, the early inhabitants of North America would have had to have traveled here somehow.

Teacher: (probing) How might they have done this?

Student: (perceiving the problem small) They could have built boats and sailed across the ocean.

Teacher: (implication question) Do you think that thousands of years before the time of Columbus they could have built boats big and strong enough to sail across the ocean?

Student: (still seeing the problem as small) Well, they could have chopped down trees to make the boats and maybe built strong oars to row across the ocean, just like the Vikings did.

Teacher: (implication question, making the need for some other form of travel more explicit) Consider the period in history we are talking about. Scientists know the North American continent was inhabited long before the birth of Christ, before the Vikings and before any knowledge of navigation.

Student: (recognizing a bigger problem) So they must not have come by sea.

Teacher: (implication question) How did individuals travel in the early periods of history?

Student: (seeing more) They must have walked, perhaps little by little.

Teacher: (implication question again) If they had walked, where would they most likely have crossed onto the North American continent?
Student: There is water everywhere. The smallest space between two continents seems to be here (student points), the Bering Strait.

Teacher: (summarizing) So, from what you've said so far, the only means of travel at that time in history would have been by foot. However, because the Asian continent from which the early inhabitants were believed to have come is separated from America by water, they somehow must have had to cross some expanse of water, perhaps at a place called the Bering Strait, since it is the shortest distance between these two land masses. Remember that they had no knowledge of boat building, and so even this small expanse of water would be a formidable challenge (another implication). This brings us to the topic of our lesson, the geographic conditions in North America during the early period of history. How do you think the early inhabitants of our continent could have crossed the Bering Strait during this time without the use of boats?

In this exchange, a small problem has grown into a much larger one through the use of implication questions. A dilemma, contradiction, or irregularity was enlarged. The teacher took a problem the learner perceived as small and, through implication questions, built it into a problem that required some thought and deliberation to engage students in the learning process as contributors and decision makers. It was also the teacher's opportunity to demonstrate capability, as student misconceptions were corrected and new alternatives, previously not considered by students, were advanced by the teacher. In this exchange, the teacher was able to impart and exhibit more knowledge to the learner, as the reasons for the final solution were developed. Implication questions have the two-sided nature of raising the excitement of learning by accentuating a dilemma that requires the teacher's knowledge to resolve. The process can be repeated with other examples to make needed solutions still more explicit to the learner.

Obtaining Commitment

Our final ingredient of successful lessons in large, heterogeneous classrooms is obtaining from students a commitment to learn. This final stage could not be attained if the teacher had not set the tone, established a need, and demonstrated his or her capability. Following these, the learner is now ready to decide whether or not to commit voluntarily to the instructional goals of the classroom. Although the preceding steps do not guarantee that the learner will make a commitment to learn, they do prepare the learner to decide to want to learn under the conditions set forth by the teacher.
Recall how important the previous steps are in preparing the learner to make this commitment and how different the large, heterogeneous classroom is from a small, homogeneous one. In a small, homogeneous classroom, the teacher obtains a response from learners to the content presented by assuming the learners are already committed to learn. There is no question that the learners will respond to questions posed by the teacher, to exercises in text or workbook, to ordered turns in a recitation activity. The only question is whether the students' responses will be right, partially right, or wrong. This assumption of commitment sometimes can be tenuous even in small, homogeneous classrooms, but it would be most unlikely in a large, heterogeneous one.

Not only can a commitment to learn not be assumed, but even a response may not be assumed. Learners in large, heterogeneous classes, in other words, are more prone not to respond at all than those in small, homogeneous classes. The cumulative strength of numbers, a rejection of the structure and routine of the classroom, and the independence and willfulness that comes from the simultaneous presence of heterogeneous value systems all may be part of the increasing number of "I don't know" responses heard from learners in large, heterogeneous classrooms; often these are thinly masked substitutes for "I don't care." Thus, the most immediate problem in large, heterogeneous classes may not be to get learners to respond correctly but to get them to respond at all. As most teachers of large, heterogeneous classes know well, no amount of badgering, pleading, or punishment can get a learner to respond—commit to the goals of the lesson—if she or he does not wish to. Fortunately, many teachers of small, homogeneous classrooms do not have the problem in large numbers, since most students, due to the dynamics that operate in small groups, encouraging uniformity, accept the structure and routine of the classroom, if only out of fear of reprimand, parental retribution, or pressure from peers. However, large, heterogeneous classrooms often are quite different, sometimes housing a third or more students steadfastly opposed to giving up their independence and willfulness by accepting the authority structure and routine of a classroom to which they remain uncommitted. In large, heterogeneous classrooms, any attempt to obtain a response must be preceded by active and direct efforts to obtain a commitment to learn, in which the student voluntarily exchanges his or her independence and willfulness for something of equal or greater value.

What is of equal or greater value than freedom? In large, heterogeneous classrooms, a commitment to learn must be connected to a payoff that the learners truly value. Contrary to some beliefs, payoffs need not always be tangible or material. This is where some models of teaching may underestimate the human mind by extolling the virtues of extrinsic reinforcement to get learners to commit to the goals of the classroom. These
reinforcers, as they are called, may unwittingly draw learners away from deeper and more powerful motives for learning. Trips to the learning center, bonus points, free time, and tokens seldom have lasting effects on students' commitment to learn, although they may get learners to behave better. Even many intrinsic reinforcers, such as good grades, parent and teacher admiration, and adult acceptance, ring hollow to many students in large, heterogeneous classrooms, since the students are too distant from any such payoff. Both types of reinforcement may underestimate the necessity of the human mind to seek resolution to a problem that is greater than oneself. Since extrinsic and intrinsic reinforcements are material and sensory, the latter being more abstract than the former, they ignore another kind of reward that all learners seek. This type of reward cannot be experienced through the senses, as are almost all other rewards to which we are accustomed, and this is why it is so rarely considered and so little understood. Let's explore this special type of reward, which can be useful for obtaining a commitment to learn from larger, heterogeneous classrooms.

Learners need to see some payoff for their commitment to learn, but they do not need to see a payoff for themselves in any personal sense. This is where we have underestimated the beauty and complexity of the mind, since our notion of reward both in and out of school has been, "What can this do for me?" The need for something personal to be received in exchange for a successful performance is often overestimated as a primary motivation to perform. Although, needless to say, most of the world is run by such satisfaction, it may not be the only or even the best way to influence and direct the behavior of others.

In large, heterogeneous classrooms, successful teachers work from a different perspective. First, these teachers are realistic enough to know that any amount of extrinsic reinforcement ("Learn it well and we'll skip the homework") or intrinsic reinforcement ("You will need this skill on any job") will not be sufficient to get and keep today's learners committed to learning. The world outside school is far too glamorous-filled with real rewards--for anything inside the classroom to pose serious competition. Kids can do nothing in school and still receive an overdose of sensory rewards afterward. This, of course, is why both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards have lost much of their effectiveness in the classroom. In times past, school may have been the only game in town from which a steady stream of reinforcement flowed. Today, our culture supplies kids with a fountain of pleasure-earned or not-starting at the youngest ages. Reinforcements that attempt to satisfy personal needs in the classroom look pale by comparison to the challenge of cars, vicarious experiences from the media, activities with peers, and even alternative routes to cognitive stimulation (e.g., electronic games, home computers, sports, and hobbies). The point is that practically every human need, including that for personal achievement, can be satisfied outside of school far better, in the eyes of learners, than in school.
This is why reward-or payoff-in the classroom must be different than and not compete with that found outside it. Successful teachers know this and that is why their lessons take a different course to obtaining a commitment to learn. For them a commitment to learn means obtaining a commitment to resolve a problem that their students see as important, if not in their own lives, then in the lives of others. In other words, beginning with establishing a need and following from demonstrating capability, a problem is the focus of each lesson. More often than not, each separate lesson is tied together with a common set of problems. Carefully crafted problems that relate to the content to be taught and that can be seen as meaningful to students are at the center stage of their lessons.

The key to payoff, then, is to present a problem in such a manner that it not only begs for resolution but can be resolved in the context of your instruction. Student commitment is not to the teacher or even to an instructional activity but to the resolution of a discordant set of facts, circumstances, or observations that must be placed in harmony, if a student's own life or the lives of others are to be made better. Even resolution of the problem is not the goal but a vehicle for securing a voluntary commitment to go on a journey that not only allows but exploits the independence and willfulness of learners.

Successful teachers in large, heterogeneous classrooms often use payoff questions to obtain a commitment. While implication questions focus learners on the problem, payoff questions focus them on solutions. Payoff questions naturally follow from implication and problem questions, to focus the learners' attention on solutions and actions. They get learners to tell you the benefits of a desired course of action.

Payoff questions have a special place in large, heterogeneous classrooms. One of their most important benefits is that they increase the acceptability and credibility of the content to learners. Since they encourage students to focus on solutions and the benefits solutions would bring, they link content to a purpose that is meaningful in the eyes of students. Academic content can not sit idle in the context of implication and payoff questions, since both of these bring it alive, first through dilemmas and contradictions and then through solutions and benefits. Throughout the process the independence and willfulness of the learner is accorded an important role, encouraging the learner to become an active decision maker and contributor to the goals of the lesson. Implication and payoff questions play the special role of affording students their independence while securing their commitment to the goals of the classroom. These types of questions beg for decisions and so become the language for decision making in a large, heterogeneous classroom.

Implication questions are "sad" questions because they accentuate dilemmas, contradictions, or irregularities that make the problem more acute. Payoff questions are "happy" questions because they point to solutions and
benefits that come from the resolution of a dilemma, contradiction, or irregularity. In fact, if an implication question is not sad, it is not a good implication question, since it should make one uncomfortable with the problem; if a payoff question is not happy, it is not a good payoff question, since it should highlight the benefits a successful resolution might bring to a problem. The goal is first to ask sad questions and then ask happy questions. This also creates variety and momentum that maintain a flow of cognitive activity that can capture the attention of students at any ability level. This tightening and then loosening, sad and then happy, dilemma and then resolution sequence of questioning creates a sense of flow, forward movement, and expectation for learners and can engage even the most passive of learners.

Let's see what payoff questions look like in the classroom. For this, let's return once again to our dialogue and carry the discussion through with one last sequence of questions-this time we will make them payoff questions. Let's pick up with the teacher's last implication question at the end of her summary.

*Teacher:* (payoff question) How do you think the inhabitants of our continent could have crossed the Bering Strait during this time without the use of boats?

*Student:* Well, they couldn't swim that far in the icy water, so maybe they walked on pieces of floating ice.

*Teacher:* (implication question) Do you think that they could jump from one ice floe to another for all that distance?

*Student:* (realizing the difficulty) Probably not, unless the ice floes were awfully close together.

*Teacher:* Scientists tell us that the temperature was much colder in the northern latitudes during this period and that the Arctic region extended much further south than it does today. Does this suggest another possibility? (payoff question)

*Student:* I've got a solution. The water could have been completely frozen, just like it is in Alaska or Siberia in Russia. That would mean they could have walked to North America, maybe with sleds of some kind to carry food and supplies.

*Teacher:* (another payoff question) Why do you find this a solution to how our continent's first inhabitants got here?

*Student:* Because it doesn't require the use of methods of travel that were known not to exist until centuries later.
Teacher: (another payoff question) Good. Are there any other solutions to how the first inhabitants of our continent got here?

Student: Well, why couldn't they have traveled up from South America?

Teacher: Good idea. (implication question) But how did they get to South America from the Asian continent, which is separated from it by a large expanse of water?

Student: (realizing an alternative) Maybe the boats didn't have to be so big or strong, like the Vikings used. They could have made rafts of logs and used vines and branches from a forest to hold them together.

Teacher: You have given us another solution to how the first inhabitants of our continent may have gotten here, which we will explore tomorrow.

Payoff questions focus the learner on two aspects of the problem. First, they focus the learner's attention on a solution rather than the problem itself. This changes the classroom from a problem-discovery climate to a problem-solving climate where attention is given to solutions and actions, not just problems and difficulties. Second, payoff questions get learners to tell you the benefits of a particular solution. They ask about the value or usefulness of a particular solution to a problem.

So far we have addressed four stages of a lesson for successfully teaching in large, heterogeneous classrooms. These stages were setting the tone (creating a warm and purposeful context for learning), establishing a need (posing a problem), demonstrating capability (showing implications of the problem), and obtaining commitment (identifying the payoff resulting from resolving the problem). These four stages were compared with gaining attention, stating the objective, presenting content, and obtaining a response, which represent some current models for successfully teaching in small, homogeneous classrooms. These latter structures will become less effective as classes become larger and more heterogeneous in learning histories, previous achievement, ability, and cultural values.

In summary, successful teachers in large, heterogeneous classrooms:

- Use situation questions to establish background facts, diagnose learner strengths and concerns about the subject matter to be taught.
- Next, quickly move to problem questions to introduce problems, difficulties, or contradictions that are associated with the topic to be taught. Problem questions imply needed changes or solutions.
- Follow problem questions with implication questions that make the problem more acute and make explicit the dilemmas and contradictions the problem and various solutions to it present.
Then, when the problem is taken seriously enough to justify action, pose payoff questions that focus the learner on constructive solutions that would resolve the dilemma or contradiction created by the problem.

We end this chapter by illustrating the use of situation, problem, implication, and payoff questions with two brief classroom dialogues. Follow the sequence of questions below to see how these teachers set the tone, establish a need, demonstrate capability, and obtain a commitment.

**Lesson objective. To teach learners how to form possessives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation questions (acknowledging strengths and concerns)</th>
<th>Problem questions (establishing need)</th>
<th>Implication question (demonstrating capability)</th>
<th>Payoff question (obtaining commitment)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is one of your most common errors in punctuation?</td>
<td>If a man owned a house, how would you write phrases using his name that would show the house was his?</td>
<td>Let's look at some others: daughter of the policeman, paper of Mrs. Brown, wings of geese.</td>
<td>How might we use an apostrophe to signify ownership?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who has ever seen in print an error in punctuation?</td>
<td>If someone were to see written &quot;Mr. Burns house,&quot; how would the reader know whether the man's name is Burn or Burns?</td>
<td>What would be some other types of errors if there were no way to convey ownership of nouns that end in &quot;s&quot;?</td>
<td>Students offer various ways the apostrophe might be used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What types of written words and phrases are most likely to have these types of errors?</td>
<td>[There is a need to punctuate the correct proper name when ownership is being conveyed.]</td>
<td>[Teacher gets students to express significance of the problem by showing possible errors in meaning without the use of punctuation.]</td>
<td>[The extent of student knowledge about the lesson is obtained and deficiencies noted.]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson objective: To teach the concept of combustion as it is used to produce energy

| Situation questions (acknowledging strengths and concerns) | Who knows what the word "combustion" means?  
Who can think of a form of transportation that uses combustion to produce energy?  
Where does combustion occur in an automobile engine to direct its energy in a safe and efficient manner?  
[Students express their knowledge and confidence with the subject matter to be studied. Leading questions assess the extent of knowledge possessed.] |
| --- | --- |
| Problem question (establishing need) | If someone were to mix air, fire, and gasoline together to produce energy, how might its destructive forces be controlled?  
[There is a need for a containment area strong enough to withstand the force and direct its energy.] |
| Implication question (demonstrating capability) | What might happen if the combustion temperature was made hotter?  
Here is a graph showing how the horsepower of an automobile engine increases with the combustion temperature.  
Now, let's see how the amount of air and fuel when heated also affect the engine's horsepower.  
[Teacher shows effects of too much, then too little air. Shows effects of too much, then too little fuel.] |
| Payoff question (obtaining commitment) | How might the amount of fuel, air, and temperature be mixed in just the right quantities to create safe and efficient energy?  
[Students offer various ways the correct mixture might be obtained.] |
CHAPTER TEN

Teacher Portraits:  
Three Years Later

In this chapter, we revisit Angela, Kurt, and Sheila three years after our last visit. Angela is completing her fifth year as a fifth grade teacher, Kurt is in his eighth year of teaching junior high math, and Sheila is a veteran of some 14 years. Since our last visit, each has discovered that nothing stands still in the life of a teacher—and the schools and classrooms in which they work. In this chapter, we see the seeds of change begin to take hold and new problems and opportunities emerge. Let’s look in on our teachers once again to see how these changes are affecting their lives. We begin by reviewing some of the thoughts and feelings that have marked each of our three teachers since our first visit.

Angela

Recall that Angela began her first teaching assignment on a rocky footing, like many first-year teachers. She admitted to living a miserable existence that first year, which was particularly upsetting for two reasons. The first was that she had always patterned herself after her mother and may have even become a teacher because of her. Because of her rough beginning, she felt a separation from her mother, whom she truly loves and admires as both mother and teacher. Even at this early stage of her career, Angela was wondering if she really wanted to be a teacher. Pride and embarrassment prevented her from seeking the support and advice she so desperately needed.

Angela’s discomfort that first year in the classroom could also be traced to Angela herself. Angela was facing a conflict between who she was and who she used to be—the person her fiance, David, remembered. “I was always so self-assured ... always in charge and on top of things,” she recalled. Now
life was controlling her, and the loss of control was becoming a contrast to her
life before she became a teacher, when things seemed simpler and more
predictable. Now her life seemed anything but predictable and she was becom-
ing increasingly uncomfortable with being turned into someone she did not like
and could not fully recognize. At one point she asked herself, "Is it all worth
it?"-meaning was it worth seeing herself in the classroom in an uglier, less
desirable state than that which she had always believed about herself. Student
teaching, her courtship with David, and even her years growing up had led her
to see herself in a different, more competent light. It is no wonder that Angela
became disillusioned with teaching that first year. Angela had yet to discover
any real reason for teaching, except to follow in her mother's footsteps, which at
this critical stage of her career was not enough to see her through the feelings of
loneliness and isolation she was experiencing.

After her first year the tide began to turn when Angela found time "to plan a
day or two in advance." Her planning seemed to have paid off: she had more
control over the events in her classroom and her life was becoming more
predictable. Control and predictability often become the goals of teachers who
are primarily concerned with self, since to stay at a level of concern that
exclusively promotes self-survival for very long is exhausting. That attitude
simply gets one through the day, with little help for making the next day any
better than the one before. A focus on the teaching task--the organization,
structure, and routine of teaching, which can bring order and regularity to a
classroom—is a persuasive alternative.

We also saw a glimmer of innovation in Angela's structure and routine that
indicated the beginning of a concern for her impact on students. In describing
her past behavior, Angela reported, "Before, I would spend most of the time in
seatwork-except for reading-just to keep the class under control. Now, I feel I
can be more daring, even though I'm frightened whenever I try something
new." In addition to Angela planning more this year, "looking for better ways
to control the class," she is beginning to reach beyond the confines of
organization and structure to seek out new alternatives, which, in the end, may
change her plans—and change them often.

At this stage of her career, Angela had yet to come fully to grips with her own
fears of dealing with the variety and diversity of learning needs that she found
in her classroom. She taught only to those who could learn and wanted to learn,
in part to "keep everything on schedule and predictable." With self-imposed
numbness, she blotted out much of the variety and texture of her classroom. As
Angela herself said, "I'm afraid if I don't do the right thing, I'll make them
worse, so I shut them out." While Angela may be more daring, she has some
way to go in acquiring a deeper concern for her impact on students.

Let's now pick up on Angela’s thoughts and feelings midway through her fifth
year of teaching.
It seems strange writing again after so long. I guess I can tell you that the past four years have been busy for me. I'm married now, and David and I will have our first child at the end of the school year. I'll have the whole summer to recuperate.

I've made a request to our principal, who is new this year, to teach first or second grade next September. Somehow having a baby got me thinking that maybe I'd like to try a lower grade-to test out my skills in some other ways. Besides, I've thought a lot about my teaching over the past few years and I'm wondering if a lower grade isn't what I really should have been teaching all along. When I think about why I became a teacher, I always remember picturing some tiny little kids sitting around me on a rug on the floor while I'm reading a story. For the longest time, I forgot about that picture in my head. I remember imagining it so well when I began college and then during my student teaching. I didn't think much about it after, since there just wasn't a choice about what grade I would teach. Having a baby made that picture come into my head again. My feelings just got hold of me and I went to Mr. Arbutroff and told him I'd like to teach a lower grade next year. If we hadn't gotten a new principal last year, I would never have had the guts to do it. I had a rough start here with the other principal, and I think he never stopped remembering me as someone who couldn't control her students. I still feel embarrassed about those first few years.

The change isn't because I don't like fifth graders; its just that I recall having these pictures in my head of teaching a lower grade, from way back when. My pregnancy just brought them out. Besides, our new principal is a lot more easygoing. When I knew I was pregnant, I went to him pretty scared about what would happen if I had the baby in May and not June. Well, he didn't bat an eye and just said, "It happens all the time. We'll line up a sub in advance, just in case." "Wow," I said to myself, "that was easy." He said I'd even get paid for the leave; it's all covered. Well, after that I really felt I could talk to him. He does a lot for the new teachers around here, too. Every new teacher participates in our induction-year program. It's a bridge between your college courses and your first year in the classroom. The interesting thing about it is that most of us here are fighting to be the ones who get to work with the beginning teachers. That's just one example of how things have changed-and I give a lot of credit to Mr. Arbutroff. So, one more change-like me teaching first grade-was no big thing. As it turned out, Mrs. Morelle is retiring this year, so I got lucky.

I forgot how strong a feeling I had about younger kids. David was puzzled by it, too, until we sorted it all out in a conversation one night. We went out to eat and all I kept talking about was why I want to
change my nice comfortable routine. He was worried I'd start all over with the problems I had my first year-and we'd both be miserable again. Well, as it turned out, I surprised us both with how I felt.

I grew up in this neighborhood and I've got a real taste for it-like my mother. I'm a lot better off now than I ever was-especially when I was growing up. Mom and Dad got a divorce early, so I grew up with my brother in a house with one parent. We all learned to live and enjoy it, even though we didn't have anything much. Well, I look around my classroom and I see myself and my brother sitting in those same desks. My kids really aren't any different and some are probably even worse off than I can imagine. When you teach fifth grade, your influence on some kids can be pretty minimal. They already have friends and lifestyles that don't fit with school. They don't know how to act in school and some of them don't know how to listen to an adult-some hardly see any. First and maybe second graders are different; they aren't so influenced by their friends yet. That's the time you can get to them-teach them what they don't get from home-a sense of responsibility.

Whenever I try to help my fifth graders-try to find out why they're having this problem or that-they bite back. They don't want that kind of help - someone poking around in their private lives about which they're already embarrassed. I won't say they can't be helped, but I've found it's a lot harder by the time they get to the fifth grade. So you see, I want to make a difference in the lives of some of these kids. I want to catch them early enough so I can do some good-and they won't bite back. Maybe I want to be both a mother and a teacher to these kids and up to now I could only be a teacher. I'm just crazy enough to think I can be both-and to believe that they've got to have a mother before they can have a teacher.

After I said this to David, I ran over and told my mother. I never really thought about it, but she said that's exactly why she became a teacher-to give her kids some of the things she had to learn the hard way. So when it all made sense to Mom, I had the guts to ask Mr. Arbutoff for the change. It was interesting that I never knew why my mother had become a teacher. I always thought Mom was just some guru that was born to teach math, social studies, and English. I never stopped to think that she had some other goals that were driving her so hard all these years. My mother and I are a lot alike-we see a school as a lot more than bricks and mortar-we see it as home for hundreds of kids.

Kurt

Let's review some of the thoughts and feelings that have marked Kurt's character since our first visit. Recall that Kurt appeared to begin his teaching
career self-assured and confident. Kurt's goal was to become organized and make events in his classroom predictable. His approach was to anticipate almost every need he might have as a teacher and to prepare himself and his teaching materials methodically to meet those needs. Above all, Kurt wanted an orderly classroom, and to achieve it he fashioned for himself a structure and routine that would work for practically every lesson. Not only did this pattern of lesson preparation serve Kurt's needs, but he also felt strongly that it served his students' needs, by providing a "routine they can come to expect and rely on." In other words, Kurt believed his needs were his students' needs and that both would benefit from always knowing what would come next.

For Kurt the best advice he could give a new teacher would be to "settle in on a routine and follow an established pattern." This meant getting organized for teaching—preparing lessons, making note cards, creating visuals and handouts—"plenty of handouts." Kurt believed that many of the problems of beginning teachers stem from being too flexible—trying too many different approaches and not realizing that one approach may not be better than any other—and in the end, becoming exhausted from trying one approach after another. Kurt's rationale for this advice was that "kids will complain about anything."

Kurt took an almost adversarial view of his students—individuals who will cause trouble if not first made passive and compliant by a visible structure and routine. For Kurt, teaching wasn't like art, drama, or being a musician—no room for spontaneity, unscheduled notes, or impromptu behaving in teaching junior high math—just the "grunt work" that all teachers should accept and learn as quickly as possible. "Fancy ideas have to go out the window" as quickly as possible.

As we saw, some of the other teachers in the "women's environment" where he begrudgingly worked had a different philosophy. While he got his ideas from experience, the others got theirs from one another—or from inservice or university coursework. They talked among themselves, stayed late and were more likely to innovate. Kurt felt this might delay the eventual solution to their problems—finding a structure and routine and sticking to it. Interestingly, Kurt preferred not to share this advice, in the belief that his peers would not be receptive to a more experienced male teacher telling them what to do. Only from a position of authority—perhaps as a principal—did he feel such advice would be influential.

However, we saw that Kurt's approach was not solving all of his problems. Kurt admitted that more than half of his consumer math class "hates walking in my door." In a rare admission, Kurt seemed to have turned from a concern for the teaching task to a concern for his impact on students. His stimulus field changed from task to students at least long enough to notice the "spacey expressions" on his students' faces. What Kurt did with this information was quite another thing. Instead of seeing it as an opportunity-
something to be changed-Kurt saw this as more or less an immutable fact of life. His solution was to maintain his "nice orderly environment" in lieu of taking his observation to a more challenging and creative solution. Other solutions, such as discussion, self-regulated learning, or cooperative activities to replace his heavy emphasis on seatwork, were dismissed as possible remedies, since Kurt believed his students "will simply use the opportunity to get me off track." Here again, Kurt revealed the adversarial position from which he chose to view his students-opponents with whom to do battle. If he could not win the battle with all of his students, he could at least control the damage through a rigidly organized routine.

Kurt's adversarial view became even more apparent when he referred to his students' inability to express themselves. Kurt dismissed the role of student contributions-especially in math. "Conversation," as he called it, might be OK in social studies but had little place in his subject, since the ideas coming from the heads of his students might not match what he was supposed to be teaching. With this statement, Kurt seemed to accept little responsibility for making the ideas coming from the heads of his students into valuable contributions that matched the material he was teaching. That dialogue in the classroom could promote student involvement, independent reasoning, and problem solving seemed not to have occurred to Kurt.

Kurt's weeding out of supposedly ill-prepared students in his algebra class provided another example of Kurt's stimulus field-exclusively focused on self and task. Kurt seemed to be adamant in sending messages to his students without looking and listening for any messages being sent back. After describing the first of several testing hurdles presented to his eighth grade algebra class, Kurt remarked, "Now, if some kids don't get the message then, they get it after my first or second test." One alternative conspicuously absent from Kurt's "weeding out" approach was to diagnose the nature of the deficiencies and provide the needed remediation. Another would have been to identify changes in the seventh grade curriculum that might reduce the deficiencies, thereby permitting larger numbers of students to benefit from his more advanced class. Either alternative, however, would have presented some discomfort for Kurt-the first requiring a change in his well-structured routine and the latter requiring a more cooperative attitude toward his peers, whom he had shunned thus far.

Let's pick up on Kurt's thoughts and feelings toward the end of his eighth year of teaching.

As you know, I've been working on my administrator's certificate, but I'm not real happy about the way things are turning out. Teaching and going to school is rough. I've got responsibilities at home, and after being around here all day, I'm not real fired up about spending another two hours in a classroom.
The few courses I've taken have gone OK. I've taken two on leadership and one on curriculum, but leadership isn't the problem around here-it's how you organize the curriculum to make it relevant to so many different kinds of learners. That's the real nitty-gritty problem for a principal in a school like this. In one class I did an outline for a math curriculum for the seventh and eighth grades as a project. I wasn't sure I'd like the course-because it was in curriculum and not administration. It kind of surprised me, but now I know why. I'm using part of the curriculum I wrote, and the seventh-grade teacher is using another part. I showed it to our math and science coordinator and he said, "Let's try teaching some of it, because it's on the new curriculum guide." The point is that someone is actually using what I did. It didn't stay as just some project. It gives me something tangible I can show off and use in my own classroom.

So when the time came for the project, I prepared some topics on probability-not actual lessons, just the kind of things that you would put into the lessons if you were really going to teach a unit on probability. Well, we had to identify in our curriculum outline not just the content we would teach, but the way we would teach it. That was the challenging part-how do you get elementary kids to understand probability? Then I thought to myself, probability is all around us everyday-there's a chance that it might rain, a chance you might get in a car wreck, a chance you might win the lottery. So why not let the kids study probability by learning how we use probability in our everyday lives to make decisions-whether or not to bring a raincoat to work, bet on a lottery, or drive on icy streets. In other words, I thought the actual content could be determined by the kids themselves, by identifying what the chances were of this or that happening in their everyday lives. So I gave them some basic rules and the kind of information they needed in order to determine the chance that certain events could occur. They signed up for a particular event of their choosing with three or four others, so we had a bunch of small groups. Each group was responsible for finding what they needed from a learning center, doing the calculations, and then giving a report to the class on how they arrived at their answer. I don't think probability could be taught at this age without making it relevant to the lives of kids. "Probability" has been sitting in our curriculum guide ever since I've been here, but we've all been afraid to touch it because we thought it was a topic kids this age just don't like. But that's not necessarily so. I got a lot out of that little project-and it made me kind of upbeat for a couple of weeks. It broke the boredom of teaching and told me that maybe I should do something like that with other topics.
Now let's review some of the thoughts and feelings that have marked Sheila's career since our first visit. Recall that when we first met Sheila, she had already experienced many of the problems Angela was facing. She admitted having some "silly notions" about teaching early in her career—that she was a born teacher and her students would automatically like and obey her. Unlike Kurt, she realized that you need more than the trappings of authority to gain the respect and commitment of students. Like Kurt, she knew teaching took planning, hard work, and more. The "more" Sheila needed at this early point in her career was discovered from other teachers during an inservice program in which beginning teachers shared their problems and ideas with experienced teachers. Recall that it was there Sheila met Martha, who not only provided friendship and support but also the advice that truly good teachers taught for more than a paycheck, job security, and the privilege of being a teacher. They taught because they had discovered that they were in the classroom for a purpose that was all theirs—and no one else's. They had shed the cliches that many use to justify their teaching careers and replaced them with a purpose for teaching that expresses who they are—the values and convictions that they care deeply about and would never compromise. Her own unique purpose became the vehicle with which Sheila moved from an exclusive concern for self, in which all her energy was being devoted to her own survival, to a concern for the teaching task, and eventually to a concern for her impact on students. Her own private purpose provided her with the strength and opportunity to seek solutions to problems from within herself instead of waiting to be saved by someone or something else.

Remember how much of Angela's initial teaching years was consumed in waiting for others to become participants in or to solve the problems she was experiencing. Sometimes solutions came and sometimes they didn't. Sheila was not going to stand around waiting, at least not without searching within herself for her own solutions. She listened attentively to Martha's advice: "Nothing good was going to happen in our classrooms unless we make it happen." This was an important shift in Sheila's life and, as we saw, in Angela's as well. In each instance, techniques and methods became less important than their own resourcefulness in achieving a unique purpose. Now every problem could have a solution—since there were no right answers, prespecified solutions, or interventions by others waiting to be discovered, only their resourcefulness in finding a response that felt comfortable.

Recall that for both Sheila and Angela, their unique purpose generated a plan of action that matched their purpose. For Angela her plan of action would be colored by her newly discovered belief that her students, especially the younger ones she was about to teach, needed not just course content but the skills by which they could successfully adapt to the world around them,
skills that might not be modeled at home. Sheila's plan of action would also be colored by her purpose. This time, however, actions would focus on getting students to become more independent in directing their own learning "just like in the real world." Hence, Sheila chose to recast a lifeless lesson into a format that better matched her purpose. The problems each was having became opportunities - opportunities to fulfill their own unique purposes. It was at this critical moment in their careers that both Angela and Sheila stopped looking for answers from others and started creating their own.

The significance of this change - or how each chose to see it - could be felt most strongly in Sheila's words. For Sheila, "Things are always changing," representing a stark contrast to Kurt's early years, in which structure and routine reigned supreme to protect convention and tradition. For Sheila, once change was seen as a commodity of life, it was not difficult to see herself as the purveyor of change - shifting from follower to leader. This loosened the reins of tradition and allowed Sheila to become one with her feelings. If change is inevitable, why not become part of the process rather than leave it to others or to fortuitous events. Unconsciously, this perspective led, perhaps more than anything else, to Sheila's ability to question her own behavior. By being in touch with her feelings - questioning how she felt about the lesson - she was able to sense her own discomfort with it and then discover why. This lesson did not match her purpose - it failed to allow her to convey to her students one of the major reasons she was a teacher. It did not afford the independence of action and critical thinking that she wanted to be a hallmark of her teaching, especially in the midst of such an obvious opportunity to do so. This was an opportunity missed - until her own feelings put her back on course.

It is interesting that both Angela and Sheila acquired an ability to separate their sense of self from their sense of accomplishment. For Angela, this led to a small but significant trend to be daring and the confidence to try something new. For Sheila, it would lead her to reflect on her own teaching, to draw out from within new and innovative responses that would look less and less like anything that had gone before, and, most importantly, to avoid self-recrimination should responses not work as expected. This is an important component for effective teaching, which even Kurt, to some extent, began to acquire. Our teachers were learning, in their own way, to exchange observations that judged their behavior for observations that recorded their behavior. The former result in conclusions of right or wrong, and the latter result in feelings of comfort or discomfort. Herein lies the difference between a teacher who is concerned exclusively with self and therefore can risk nothing, and the teacher who is concerned with his or her impact on students and will try almost anything to obtain the desired response. The former looks for solutions that protect the self and therefore is capable of little other than conventional responses that promote the status quo. The
latter looks for solutions that actively engage students in the learning process—solutions that may be anything but conventional. In other words, a teacher whose concerns are with his or her impact on students draws from within responses that may not fit any previous mold or shape—to match the variety of responses coming from the stimulus field. With this attitude, Sheila had at her disposal untold responses to almost every challenge imaginable—and the wherewithal to see problems as opportunities to fulfill her unique purpose for teaching.

Let's listen to Sheila's own thoughts and feelings in her fourteenth year of teaching.

You've asked me to write something about how I feel about being a teacher for 14 years. Well, I'm not sure I know what to say—or maybe I'm afraid I won't say what you want to hear.

I look back at my teaching career and it all seems so fuzzy. I've gone through so many different stages that I'm not sure I can even describe them. One of the things I remember over the past 14 years is how often I thought about leaving teaching. After my experience in Milwaukee, I thought I'd never make it this far. Problems with an earlier marriage and later raising three kids while teaching every day made me want to quit more than a few times. Back then, I really couldn't quit because we needed the money—and I guess I wasn't ready to risk taking a chance at trying something new. Now my kids are older, and Dan and I are a lot more secure than before and I believe I really could quit. Sometimes I think Dan would even welcome it so our lives wouldn't be so hectic all the time and we'd have more time together. So one of the reasons I've stayed in teaching this long isn't really a reason any more.

You've asked me to tell you why I'm here. All I can say is I'm not sure. There are plenty of reasons someone like me would want to stay home all day—or maybe have a more glamorous job, if I could get one. Being a teacher this long can be boring because even if you're good at what you're doing there really aren't any rewards to keep you at it. A teacher stays a teacher—you don't move up to a lot more responsibility after 14 years, or aren't even recognized as a good teacher. Your life pretty much stays the same no matter what you do. Good or bad, you get to keep your job and keep on doing the same old things. So you see, for someone like me, with 14 years, the future looks pretty much like the past. Sometimes I compare my life now with what it could be if I were sitting at home or working in some office somewhere. One of the first things that hits me is the freedom I have here to be myself—to try to do some of the things I think are important. Even sitting at home all day—which sounds nice—wouldn't give me all that much freedom,
because then I'd feel I would have to justify my existence to Dan and maybe even to myself in some other way. I'd clean the floors and rugs, keep the house a lot neater, and do all those things people do who are at home all day. I thought to myself, "That's not freedom." I may not have to do those things, but knowing me, I'd do them, just to feel good about not having a job. Then I thought I could work in an office someplace. Being an English teacher, I've had this desire most of my life that someday I'd get a job editing books, but behind it all I keep wondering, do I want to edit someone else's books or do I want to write my own stuff-like the lessons I teach? When you think about it, teaching is like working for yourself-even though you have to put up with a lot of nonsense that has nothing to do with teaching. So my fantasy has always stayed a fantasy because I just don't like working for someone else.

I know that doesn't make an experienced teacher's job a bed of roses, but it did give me a kind of perspective that made me think a little differently about my job. It may be frustrating at times, but it's a job I really create. To tell you the truth, when I close my classroom door, there isn't a soul in the world who really has much control over what I do. Now that's a scary feeling, but the truth is that I'm running the show and I'm responsible for everything that happens. That gives me the push I need to say to myself, "Now, let's make it good!" I think teachers, especially younger teachers, don't realize the freedom they have to explore and innovate in their own classrooms. Then when I compare it to some other types of jobs where someone's breathing down your neck all day to get something done you don't care beans about--teaching at my age doesn't look so bad.

This school district does a lot to make teachers like me stick around. I'm at level 4, so I have to take some extra assignments each year in order to stay there. For the past year I've been supervising student teachers and serving as a mentor for a program we have for beginning teachers. Both take a lot of my time, but getting to do something different really helps pep me up. I like helping younger teachers. I've done it for years, but what the career ladder does is give me recognition for doing it, which I never got before. Being at level 4 carries some weight around here and I can't help but enjoy some of the attention I get because of it.

For example, I have some say on how many student teachers we need. I'm also in charge of choosing mentors to work with our first-year teachers. It's always a hassle trying to find the right matches-and keeping on top of any problems or changes that may be needed, but all in all, I like having some responsibilities in addition to my teaching. Not everyone feels the same way around here about the career ladder, but
as far as I'm concerned, it's been one of the best things for teachers like myself who have been around a long time and need some recognition that they can do more than just teach.

I've given you a lot of reasons why I'm still a teacher, but maybe not the one that strikes me as the most important. I got into this business a long time ago because of the kids. Well, at first, when I began teaching, the trouble they dished out was overwhelming. I couldn't control my classes and I was frightened by having to teach almost adult kids who were bigger than I was. I felt so intimidated trying to tell them what to do - I kind of took charge, you might say. Well, that was the biggest mistake of my life because all they did was rebel against me and the system. What I did was to try to be as tough or tougher than they were by treating them like little kids. I took all their freedom and decision making away by setting myself up as some big authority. I did it to control my classes, which, with my timid personality, I knew would be difficult, but I kind of stripped them of their dignity as well--and that made them fight me all the more. It was a no-win situation that I was carrying over from one year to the next without ever realizing it--except that I felt I was a lousy teacher.

Then, with the help of some advice from more-experienced teachers, one in particular, I gradually switched my approach. To tell you the truth, it was more out of necessity for survival than anything else. One of the biggest changes for me was realizing that I could never control my classes or get kids to learn unless they wanted to. You see, in those days, I thought authority as a teacher was all I needed. I didn't know how to balance authority with being warm and accepting. Afraid that being warm and accepting would send the wrong message, I decided to pretend I was really tough and hard. Well, it didn't take long for them to see through it all and leave me with all the trappings of authority but none of the respect needed to get them to accept me. I realized that instead of taking away their independence, I should have been acknowledging it and arranging my lessons to give them back the independent judgment and decision-making skills they knew they already had.

So I changed almost everything I was doing, painfully, little by little. I started out my lessons by acknowledging their strengths -how their own experiences related to what I was presenting, how they had already mastered similar material, and how they could use their decision making to decide some things for themselves. This set a completely different tone. It said that I wanted my students to think for themselves and that I expected them to be decision makers-just like in real life. Next, I learned the importance of establishing the need for what I was going to present-why it would be relevant in their lives. This told them that I wasn't just teaching them this or that because it was in the text. It
said, "I'm not going to waste your time telling you something just because someone else says it's important."

These things went a long way to change the mood in my classroom. I don't think I would have been able to make it if the mood had not changed to a more accepting climate. I just wouldn't have had the guts to give up the trappings of authority that I thought would keep things under control. The truth was that things were under control when my kids wanted them to be.

The next thing I did changed all that. I substituted real authority for my authoritarian style, by showing my kids I knew my stuff. I didn't make it easy like some of the exercises in the book. I took examples that they never saw before and worked through them step by step. I couldn't really do this my first year of teaching because, to tell you the truth, I didn't know my stuff that well. I was teaching a lot of literature and grammar that I didn't know that well. So I had to read a lot and get ideas from other books and outlines, but in the end, I always made it a point to show that I was really competent at what I was asking them to learn, by going beyond the examples in the text. I would challenge them to be as good as I was by showing them I could do it and how they could do it. Sometimes I would ask them for examples or problems to work on in front of the class. I would show how I actually answered this or that question, or made that conclusion or interpretation-so they would have a model that they could follow in their own minds and use without my help.

Finally, I tried to get them to commit themselves to the goals of my lesson. Sometimes this worked and sometimes it didn't. For example, I always have trouble explaining something practical about what I'm teaching. Why do it, in other words, except that someone somewhere thinks it's important. Well, you'd be surprised how often it looks impossible, and then you think about it and say to yourself-this poem or that story says this about our modern world-or is talking about this kind of thing that was in the headline of the paper the other day. Most of the time it's easier than you think, because it was this same connection with real life that made the author write about it in the first place. The curriculum guide just forgot to tell us about it to help make the connection. That's what I do in my lessons. I supply the reasons it's important and what good can come of it. Then I don't need to hide behind my authority. The kids give me my authority.

Reflections

In this chapter we revisited Angela, Kurt, and Sheila after three years. Let's summarize how each has changed since the last visit.
Angela

Angela has finally found a purpose for teaching that she can truly believe in. With the coming of her own child, she reflects on her early thoughts of becoming a teacher and finds them strangely similar to the mothering instincts that now are taking hold of her. Her change to first grade next year has become a major catalyst for her "whole child" approach, which she believes teaching, especially teaching the very young, requires. Besides, in this low-income school and neighborhood, teachers may be among the few purveyors of the skills for living that many of her children will need in their adult lives.

We see another significant change in Angela's rapprochement with her mother. Even her continued reference to "Mom" instead of "Mother," which she preferred during our earlier visits, seems to indicate a closer, more meaningful relationship. Now her respect and admiration turns more productive as she sees her mother not just as a good teacher but as a pillar of support for her own teaching and the problems she is having. She also sees similarities between her and her mother that allow their relationship to become more productive for each of them. Angela receives the wisdom of her mother's age and experience and her mother receives an opportunity to teach her daughter some of the same lessons of life that she had to learn at an earlier age.

No doubt Angela's new-found relationship with her principal also helped move her from a focus on self to a focus on the teaching task and students. A change in principals afforded the opportunity for Angela to forget some of the embarrassing episodes of her first years of teaching and erase the tension and self-consciousness of her rough start.

Angela has changed in other ways as well. With the coming of a child and her much-awaited move to the first grade, she is beginning to see a secure future in teaching. Her doubts about a career in teaching have been laid to rest, at least for the time, by the increasing frequency of successes in her classroom. She foresees that someday she may be just like her mother, who seems to have a similar approach to teaching. As Angela says, "Many of the children in this school don't know how to act in school, and some of them don't know how to behave in front of an adult." Both Angela and her mother would agree that their approach to teaching is tied to their own childhood experiences and an intense commitment to an understanding of the community in which they live and work. Angela is already acquiring strong beliefs related to her teaching, that kids "have to have a mother before they can have a teacher." Angela discovers that this was also why her mother became a teacher, making their purposes for teaching nearly identical. For Angela and her mother, a school is "a lot more than bricks and mortar; we see it as home for hundreds of kids." Although we will have to wait to see
if Angela's new-found purpose and belief in herself will sustain her through her later years, we find that Angela is now poised for change and a permanent shift toward a focus on her impact on students.

Kurt

Kurt also has undergone significant changes. His bout with a schedule of evening courses to obtain an administrator's certificate has taken its toll on this earlier ambition. The change, however, seems to be a meaningful one, in that Kurt realizes that maybe he doesn't really want to be an administrator, despite his earlier belief that change can only be handed down from a position of authority. Kurt found that change may also come where he expected it least—from his own efforts as a teacher. Oddly enough, his change in thinking came as a result of coursework in curriculum development, not in administration. The former he found more practical, perhaps because it appealed more to his instincts as a teacher. Kurt seized the opportunity to be practical by completing a curriculum outline on probability, which, surprising to him, was accepted by his math and science coordinator and used by his peers.

The result of his new-found acceptance among peers seems to have set the stage for a move from an almost exclusive focus on the teaching task to one that includes a focus on students. This was revealed in the unexpected manner in which he designed parts of his unit on probability. Admittedly, probability is an advanced topic in the eyes of many junior high students, but Kurt used student contributions, a learning center, and group work to make the topic come alive. Here we see Kurt focusing on the reactions and behaviors of his students and caring enough about them that his usually rigid classroom structure and routine is replaced with an approach that seems to acknowledge the learning needs of his students. Now Kurt is creating and innovating, not just responding in the same old manner to which he's been accustomed. Kurt has adapted himself to the specialized needs of his students by creating alternatives that take into account who they are and how they can be reached.

Kurt may also be well on his way to finding his own unique purpose. Although we must wait to find out what it is that will keep Kurt going in his later years, it will no doubt have something to do with his new-found interest in developing curriculum. From it, Kurt filled one of the most important needs a teacher can have—acceptance by others. Students are one audience from whom we want acceptance, but peers are another. In the latter case, Kurt is beginning to find acceptance from those who earlier were only passive fixtures in his environment, and as a result, he will no doubt reach out to them again for more acceptance through similar projects. Although
teaching may not always be as exciting or eventful as Kurt would like, new challenges this year are beginning to change his outlook.

Sheila

During this visit, we see Sheila in a somewhat melancholy state as she reflects on her 14 years of teaching experience. She admits the sometimes boring and frustrating nature of the job, and she even laments about a future that confines her to the classroom. These are all typical emotions after 14 years of teaching, but what Sheila comes to realize is that they may be typical of anyone after 14 years at any job. She compares her present state with her fantasy of becoming an editor. The comparison is effective in drawing out from Sheila a need she may not have known she had—being her own boss. As glamorous as publishing may be in her fantasy, she does not escape the reality that her workday would not be under her control as much as it is in her own classroom. Staying at home, which may for the first time in her life be possible, may not be a solution to her occasional bouts of boredom and frustration. She would not be her own boss there either, as she would only make up tasks for herself that others might expect her to do in order to justify her existence. These are not insignificant reflections on Sheila's future development. She is becoming closer to the person inside and feeling more comfortable with who she really is and really wants to be in life. She finds that teaching, for all its hardships, is a pretty good match with those things in life she wants the most.

She refers to her classroom as though it were a private empire for which she alone is responsible—which makes her, in a sense, her own boss. As she says, when her classroom door closes, "I'm running the show and I'm responsible for everything that happens." Sheila likes and needs that feeling to give her the push to continue, after 14 years, to make things work. For Sheila, this is a reward for teaching that might not be provided by many other jobs. It is for Sheila just one of the reasons she is deciding to remain a teacher. For her advice to younger teachers, she says, "I think teachers, especially younger teachers, don't realize the freedom they have to explore and innovate in their own classrooms!" The freedom is always there, Sheila would say, it just takes imagination and a focus on students to see the many different ways it can be released.

When we think about Angela's earlier preoccupation with self and Kurt's rigid adherence to structure and routine, it is not difficult to see how difficult creativity and innovation are to come by in a classroom controlled by self and task. Creativity and innovation are the very qualities that broke Sheila's boredom and frustration and led her to aspire to new heights. What was it that made the difference? Simply put, it was the concern she had for
her impact on students. Why is this so important for releasing her from the confines of tradition and convention, from which boredom and frustration eventually arise? A focus on students is important because it requires a variety of responses to meet the learning needs of students-new and unique responses like Angela's focus on the whole child, Kurt's attempt to make probability relevant by using the contributions of students, and Sheila's paired-team approach to correcting a grammar exercise to make an old lesson come alive. Each of these began with a student focus that required the freedom to respond by creating something that did not exist before. That's the magic that keeps Sheila surpassing her own expectations and finding new challenges and opportunities where others only find a focus on themselves or the teaching task. Finally, it appears that Sheila has found a model of teaching that seems to transcend many of the problems of the less-experienced teacher. She passes dignity and respect on to her students by identifying their strengths, establishes a need for what she will teach by pointing out its implications, challenges her students by going beyond textbook examples, and, finally, gains their commitment to the goals of her lessons by emphasizing their relevance in an adult world.

Later, we will look in again on the lives of Angela, Kurt, and Sheila to see how they finally adapt to the changes that each has set in motion.
Leaders, Mentors, and Partners

Teachers today need patience to live through the change, complexity, and ambiguity that surround them. In this chapter, we will explore some of the sources from which this patience can be drawn and the important role leaders, mentors, and partners must play in providing it.

No social unit, no matter the size—department, school, school district—can exist without the bonding provided by a common value system. Although many value systems may exist in your community, school, and classroom, only one must prevail among the professionals with whom you work, brought together by coincidence or providence; it must communicate a consistent message that is known to all students, no matter what their personal values may be. Although our culture permits and encourages a multitude of values among our citizens, there can be no confusion about the professional values of teachers who must work together in department, grade, and school to foster the goals of instruction. In other words, not only must teachers have a purpose and belief in themselves but so must the unit of which they are a part.

Without a core of values held in common, there can be none of the bonding and mutual support that are indispensable for living and working in a disordered environment. There must be order somewhere and that order must come from leaders, mentors, and partners who share common instructional goals. In this chapter, we will discuss the important roles of leaders, mentors, and partners and how they must be strengthened to provide a context of growth and change that provides the variety necessary to work and excel in today's classrooms.

Leaders

"Leadership" is one of those special words in the English language that is often talked about but little understood. Just when we think we are beginning
to understand it, we find more layers of fancy verbiage and good intentions hiding any real meaning it may have. Volumes have been written about leadership, and seminars and courses developed to give it to others, but when all is said and done, we gain the impression that a leader is someone who possesses King Solomon's wisdom, Freud's insight, Einstein's knowledge, and Florence Nightingale's dedication. In the end, those who have it appear to have been born with it.

The simple truth is that sometimes the least likely place in which to find leadership is with someone who holds a position that requires it. Combine with this the simple truth that 1% of all leaders are born—the other 99% earn their leadership—and we have quite a different picture of a leader. A leader therefore can be anyone, and many are individuals who do not refer to themselves as leaders or have positions that legitimize their superior gifts. They do not even seek such positions of power or authority. They are nobody of any consequence as measured by bureaucratic rank, and they make no claims to any special competence that isn't already in plentiful supply. They do, however, communicate a set of values that others can rally behind with no personal loss or compromise to their own personal values. They are inconspicuous because they give authority and responsibility to others until there is none left for themselves. In other words, they let others do the leading. In a nutshell, they live in the trenches. They do the things supposedly done by those who follow:

- Teach the low-level classes, but not exclusively
- Teach the high-level classes, but not exclusively
- Collect permissions for a field trip, rather than delegate the work to a new teacher
- Arrange a meeting for you with the principal, giving you a start on a potentially awkward interchange
- Take the class material with some copies missing
- Give another the opportunity to attend a workshop or conference if only one from your school or department can attend
- Take the unpleasant assignment—hall duty, cafeteria monitor, school bus escort—rather than pass it to another

True leaders shift their focus of control from "me" to "we"—making them the epitome of Stage 3 teachers and models for others who wish to become Stage 3 teachers.

The leaders we will discuss in this chapter represent all teachers who are leaders, not just those who have been given formal recognition as leaders. Any teacher can be a leader in the context of his or her peers: as a supervisor of a student teacher, as a mentor, or as an individual willing to assume some responsibility for change and innovation within a department, subject-matter
area, or grade level. In other words, money, status, and recognition should never be reasons for becoming a leader, since they have nothing to do with effective leadership—and many who have them are the antithesis of effective leaders. Instead of wanting to serve, such "leaders" want to be served. They are managers, not leaders—mechanics who are responsible for the nuts and bolts, who keep everything in place and in the process, give their attention to protecting the status quo. These individuals by their titles may be leaders but often are not the leaders who inspire change and growth in others. Real leaders—and every school, grade level, and department has them—are those who have discovered a commitment to personal growth from within themselves and will pass it on to all others who are willing to watch and listen. Let's look more closely at who these quiet but influential individuals are and, most important, how you can become one.

Social units—those groupings of individuals with whom we work—need a purpose and belief in themselves, just as do individuals acting alone. In other words, your department, subject-matter area, or grade level should represent a shared sense of values. However, what some teachers and administrators fail to see is that this shared sense of values rarely comes from above—from an authority figure, school policy, or curriculum. If the unit in which teachers work and with which they identify is to have a shared set of values, it probably will come from one or a small number of individuals within the unit who radiate a set of values that others at first find acceptable, then admirable, and eventually adopt for themselves. It is in this manner—from the grass roots up—that values are communicated to members of a social unit. In some cases, the unit itself radiates such an admirable set of values that it becomes a model for other units—departments, subject-matter areas, or grades—which in turn adopt the values for themselves.

There are two interesting aspects of this description of how a social unit finds purpose and discovers a belief in itself. The first is that most faculty in a department, subject-matter area, or grade level wait for a sense of purpose and direction to come from their superiors. Sometimes it comes as expected and sometimes it doesn't. If purpose and direction, and the innovation and change they so often dictate, come from any higher level, most often they will be in the form of an acknowledgment of the unit's own ideas and perhaps the material resources to carry them out. As important as acknowledgment and material support may be, they do not create purpose and direction—they follow them. Purpose and direction can only come from individual values—knowing what needs to be done and going out on a limb to do it.

Values come from individuals, although they can be highly contagious among individuals in a unit. How many times have we heard a victorious team interviewed on television, when individual team members pointed to one individual for giving them the strength and conviction to battle the odds
and to win. The conviction of one or a small number of players spreads among other members of the team, especially during times of crisis. What is surprising is that the purpose and conviction that all experience does not always come from those who are most visible—team captain, quarterback, or even the coach. It often comes from "just a player"—like everyone else but who somehow found within himself or herself a purpose and conviction that all the other players quickly saw and adopted for themselves, making the unit strong and invincible. Finding purpose and direction may be what winning is all about, on the playing field as well as in the classroom. The point is that those who wait for direction to come from others—especially those who wait for it to come from above to make their work more enjoyable, satisfying, and productive—may have a long wait. Only individuals in the trenches can provide their own leadership, which more often than not starts with a single individual whose purpose and belief becomes the basis for a set of values shared by all members of the unit. Because you are reading this book, that person not only could be you but most likely is you.

A second interesting aspect of how a social unit finds purpose and conviction is its risk-taking behavior. Most individuals don’t take risks; that’s not how anyone rises to a level of authority in today’s schools. Social units—those groupings of professionals that fit somewhere into the organizational structure to make it all work—do not usually take risks. It is simply too complicated to form a group mind with sufficient speed and conviction to respond to a problem in any but the most conventional of ways. To respond to it in other than a well-worn, conventional way would be to introduce variety into the social unit, and that would present some risk. Notice the close and necessary relationship between variety and risk; generally, one does not come without the other. Also, groups as well as individuals in authority are far more likely to err on the side of security—being too cautious—than on the side of variety—being innovative and different to match the variety coming from the stimulus field. This is not an indictment of authority figures or administrators at the department, subject-matter, or grade level, since it is not their role to take risks but, instead, to run things smoothly. To run things smoothly, one quickly learns to run things as they have been run previously.

The point is that if purpose and conviction can only come from individuals, so too must any risk-taking behavior that departs from the status quo. Why would anyone want to depart from the status quo, from the safe and proven confines of convention and tradition? One reason is that to create a context of increasing order, to combat disorder, the variety provided by the stimulus field must be matched by an equal level of variety from some other source. This requires risk-taking behavior—untried and unproven alternatives—that those in authority and social units collectively are ill at ease considering. It is true that neither the higher authority nor the social
unit collectively ever experiences the variety from the stimulus field first-hand, so they can enjoy the luxury of staying with convention and tradition—whether these work or not.
The same thing often happens to a social unit when one of its members responds with risk-taking behaviors as when someone responds with purpose and conviction. The social unit at first tolerates it, then accepts it, and eventually adopts it. Risk-taking behavior and the variety and innovation it brings spread to members of the social unit just as do purpose and conviction, until the entire unit is changed and strengthened by it. In both instances, it all started with a single individual whose purpose, conviction, and risk-taking behavior caught the notice of and eventually influenced his or her peers. The mistake often lamented by some teachers is that their hard work (purpose and conviction) and success (at the cost of some risks) did not come to the attention of anyone in higher authority—their department chair, curriculum supervisor, or principal. They then lose purpose and conviction and never take risks again. Their mistake is that they are focusing on the wrong audience. Change and recognition (at least immediate change and recognition) cannot come from these higher sources because of their role and obligation to provide security, exclude variety, and protect convention and tradition. The real audience—that which is truly the most influential—will be peers the social unit of which you are a part. Social units can not collectively create purpose and conviction any more than they can create risk-taking responses, but they can and do respond to those behaviors displayed by their members and assimilate them into the fabric of the unit. Here is an important lesson for all who teach: Nothing in our environment will change unless we ourselves change it. For change to occur we must first have purpose and conviction and then the risk-taking behavior to put our purpose and conviction into practice. Change can only occur from the bottom up, since only those at the bottom can experience the variety from which change must come. in social units—groups of professionals at the department, subject-matter, or grade level—is where your efforts, the results of your own professional growth, must be felt, first in the eyes of one and then another, until the unit of which you are a part assimilates your ideas into a shared set of values, erasing all trace of its origin. This is the nature of change as it must occur and always has occurred. Who are the leaders in a school, and what characteristics do they possess that make them influential within their social unit? Although many characteristics of leaders have been cited in the literature, there are only eight that I would call basic to leadership among teachers. The teachers who are most influential among other teachers and are respected by them:

- Have a purpose for teaching that expresses who they are
- Believe in themselves enough not to rely on reinforcement and rewards from outside themselves
• Are student-focused—concentrate on accurately perceiving and understanding the stimulus field that their lesson plans will affect
• Are results-oriented—because they have a purpose, they know what changes in their students they are working to achieve
• Network—continually explore new relationships with peers, resource personnel and administrators who can help them achieve their purpose
• Leverage—they try to achieve the greatest results with the most efficient use of their resources and energy, which they know are in short supply
• Empower—guide and inspire others to find a purpose, believe in themselves, and take responsibility to achieve their own carefully chosen goals
• Innovate—encourage themselves and others to use intuition, experience, and common sense to think flexibly, value fresh ideas, ask penetrating questions, and take advantage of unexpected events

Let’s look at each of these basics of leadership to see what makes them so influential in a unit.

**Having a Purpose**

As we have seen earlier, personal growth starts with having a purpose. Yet it is surprising to find that many teachers have not thought much about why they are teaching, and even fewer link their teaching with an expression of their values. We teach for many reasons—to support the family, add to the family income, be a member of a respected profession—but seldom do we think of our job as teachers as an opportunity to be ourselves. Those teachers who do so expose to others around them a style and personality that are distinct and almost immediately admired by others in their department, subject-matter area, or grade level. It is not necessarily that others admire the purpose you have chosen, but that you have a purpose and conviction at all. In other words, an individual who feels strongly about anything and backs up his or her feeling with conviction is an increasingly rare commodity these days, and this attracts the attention of others. It is their own lack of purpose that attracts them to such an individual and brings up such questions as: Why does she have such a strong belief? What makes him work so hard? How does she keep going?

Underneath these questions is a silent admiration. Such questions, if posed face to face, might well be interpreted as put-downs. They suggest that someone is crazy to give the system more than is expected or than ever could be rewarded by it. Of course, the teachers who have purpose and conviction never choose them with the idea that recognition or reward would follow. They choose a purpose for themselves—not their department head or school
principal. This is what really bothers others within the unit and also becomes a source of inspiration for them. They see someone enjoying the same job that they do and can't help but be amazed how such enjoyment can be. They observe carefully, half disbelieving what they see and half wanting to feel excitement and enjoyment from the same activities—feelings perhaps they too once experienced. In other words, having a purpose is contagious because it is a source of meaning for others who have long lost their own sense of meaning. Seeing its results in another over time, they grow to admire it and eventually search for it themselves.

**Believing in Yourself**

We have made no secret of the necessity of believing in yourself in a disordered environment. In the frenetic context of many of today's schools, you readily can ask, "If I don't believe in myself, who will believe in me?" Perhaps a spouse, loved one, or close friend does, but that is no guarantee that the confidence derived from it will transfer to your classroom at the time you most need it. Leaders—those who are most influential in the professional lives of others in their unit—exude confidence. They have put the judgmental Self 1 to rest and see events apart from the good/bad, right/wrong value judgments that others so readily place upon them. They are like umpires in their own game, who indeed must call balls and strikes of their own and their students, but to them these are simply events that represent hits and misses. A miss—handling Johnny's misbehavior, at making quadratic equations understandable, at showing competence in forming possessives before the class, or in gaining the confidence of recalcitrant learners—is simply an event that happened—and that can be changed. In fact, for these leaders there are only near misses, since every event that occurs is an opportunity to change things for the better the next time around.

It is interesting to observe how others in the social unit see peers who exude a belief in themselves. There is sometimes more than a tinge of jealousy, as the observer thinks, "He has no right to be that confident, especially when he makes as many mistakes and has as many problems in the classroom as I do." In a sense the observers are right—why should someone else be undaunted by the same problems that they fret over? The difference between a disregard for the evaluative environment in which we are all required to work and a belief in yourself is the positive and constructive outlook that a leader has on things gone wrong. What becomes a source of admiration to others in the social unit is not simply a belief in yourself in times of adversity—that may be met with dismay or even jealousy—but the tangible rewards it brings to improving your own performance and the performance of others who may be watching.
Leaders within social units are also student-focused. We have already underscored the importance of concentrating on the stimulus field—the students in all their complexity, to whom your instruction will be targeted. This too is a source of influence in a social unit; peers know what the focus of their activity should be, even if it is not their focus much of the time. If students are not the focus of a teacher’s attention, then what is?

We saw earlier that two surrogates for a student focus are focus on self and focus on the teaching task. An exclusive focus on either siphons valuable energy away from the teacher, and that energy is no longer available for obtaining results. While focus on self and focus on task keep the teacher active in choosing some goal-security for the Stage 1 teacher, task organization for the Stage 2 teacher—they leave the teacher too drained to carry out any other goal. All teachers, at some time and to some degree, will be concerned with self and task. An exclusive focus on either, which is sometimes notable among beginning teachers, shifts concentration to goals that in the end may have little or no relationship to student learning, although they may provide a false sense of accomplishment and even be mistakenly satisfying to the teacher. This is a real danger in many of today’s schools, since a disordered learning environment naturally places teachers first in a mode of self-survival and later in a rigid and highly organized routine that shuts out the disorder. Notice how difficult it would be for a beginning teacher not only to let the disorder in but to manage it in such a way that student, not teacher, needs are met.

Others in a unit, especially those experienced at teaching, know Stage 1 and Stage 2 teachers when they see them, even if they do not use quite the same terms we have. They are conspicuous among their peers, particularly if one or more teachers in the unit are student-focused to provide a point of comparison. They are so conspicuous because teachers at Stage 1 and Stage 2 talk about such different things that it is immediately noticeable, even in informal conversations and brief classroom visits. The learning and performance needs of students rarely come to the attention of Stage 1 and Stage 2 teachers, since either they or their teaching materials and activities are always
at the center of their own attention. It is as though for them teaching is simply the task of managing their own behavior (Stage 1) or their instructional materials and activities (Stage 2). To make improvements in either area ("I now can control the class better" or "I have visuals and practice handouts for every lesson") is to them all that is needed to be a success. Of course, they strive to get better and better at it, without noticing the effects of these so-called improvements on their learners.

Members of any unit—at the department, subject-matter, or grade level—are aware of the different concerns expressed by their peers, if only because they have to listen to them so often—before school, between classes, and at lunch. Although members of a unit are not prone to cast judgments on their own kind, for fear they too will be judged, their observations of others in their group are remembered. They are remembered simply because we all want to know where we are relative to others, even if we're not quite sure where we should be or even want to be. This habit of checking our own behavior against the behavior of others brings the teacher who is student-focused the silent admiration of many of his or her peers. It is this student focus that for some members of the unit provides a direction of not just where they should be going, but where they most want to be in the months and years ahead. Student-focused teachers inevitably become models for those who wish to attain a higher level of personal growth and professional competence.

**Results-Oriented**

It is not always true that to be student-focused is also to be results-oriented. Results do have to do with students, so the former cannot be separated from the latter, but the reverse is not always true. An exclusive focus on students does not guarantee that the learning needs of students will be met. Leaders within social units are results-oriented—not just because they focus on students, but because they focus on meeting the learning needs of their students. These can lead to two quite different instructional routines in the classroom.

Some teachers are consumed with their students in the absence of a focus on the students' cognitive well-being. How could this be? It occurs in some form or another every day for every teacher, increasingly so in today's large, heterogeneous classrooms. In these classrooms large portions of a teacher's time is and sometimes must be devoted to serving the emotional as well as cognitive needs of learners. Fifty years ago, many of these emotional needs would have been met within the then-predominant two-parent family or, if not, would have simply been ignored, owing to the rigid classroom management style often employed at the time. In today's classrooms the
emotional needs of the learner-for love, security, respect, authority, peer admiration, etc.-must be a part of any instructional routine, if only because learning will not occur-or occur efficiently-without some accommodation to and understanding of these other needs. So it goes without saying that teachers today do many things other than teach, and some do them more than teach. Add to this the clerical tasks now delegated to teachers in increasing numbers and the many administrative interruptions with which teachers are burdened, and some classrooms exhibit little of what an observer of 50 years ago might have called teaching.

Teachers who are leaders in their unit put an interesting twist on the double burden of meeting the cognitive as well as the emotional needs of their students. While some teachers either ignore these emotional needs altogether-sometimes to the detriment of their cognitive goals-and others consume most of their instructional time in dealing with them, teachers who gain the most admiration from peers in their unit are those who attempt to meet at least some of their learners' emotional needs within the context of their cognitive goals. What this most frequently represents is a classroom management style and approach to delivering course content that is flexible, taking into consideration the background, experiences, and academic histories of the learners to be taught. The focus is on results, which can come only from mastering the content taught. Each class may be taught in different ways to accommodate the emotional as well as cognitive needs of the learners. Cooperative learning activities, individualized instruction, self-regulated learning exercises, independent study, and large and small groups, together with more traditional lecture, review, drill, and practice formats, are mixed within and between classes to accommodate student interests and previous academic histories. It is not the expected outcome or effects of instruction that are changed or accommodated, but the mode in which the instruction is delivered to learners, that mode or mix being determined by the composition of the class and the subject matter to be delivered.

This is in contrast to a classroom in which the teacher is trying to grapple with the many student emotional needs that may be implicit or explicit. Instead of attempting as best as possible to meet the emotional needs of learners in the context of a cognitive objective-for example, by using cooperative learning to reduce anxieties, self-regulated learning to provide for independence, small groups to allow personal authority to emerge, or group discussion to acknowledge decision makers-the teacher attempts to remedy emotional needs directly by changing instructional goals to accommodate the needs. These teachers befriend their students in the opposite way from that discussed in a previous chapter; they not only allow their students to see them as their friend, but they also become friends with their students.

Previously I indicated the difference between these two sides of what may appear to be the same coin. One responds to the emotional needs of
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the students and the other responds to the emotional needs of the teacher. The latter has the deleterious effect of replacing the dominant-subordinate context in which elementary and secondary school instruction must necessarily take place with a classroom structure that interferes with the decision-making prerogative of the teacher to achieve instructional goals and standards. In such a structure, instruction quickly becomes the process of meeting student needs, with little or no thought of the effects of the process on the cognitive development of learners.

Results-oriented teachers are leaders in their units because they do explicitly what many other teachers do implicitly. That is, they make no secrets about wanting to cover the curriculum with the result of achieving high levels of knowledge, comprehension, and performance skills in their learners—as they will be measured by district-wide examinations, exit tests of school competencies, screening tests given by potential employers, and tests required for entrance to advanced training. In other words, the focus of the teacher's attention is on those results expected and increasingly demanded by the society in which the learner must live and work. Although many argue about the value of tests themselves, there is little doubt that the results they are intended to register will be increasingly required by the quickly changing technological environment in which we live. Teachers in social units at all levels of the school environment know this and it is why many respect the teacher who is results-oriented.

Networking

Another characteristic of leaders is that they actively explore relationships with other professionals who can help them achieve their purpose. They are in a sense individuals who not only can make friends easily but who actively seek out colleagues who can identify with their purpose and with whom they have something in common.

Networking would be a vacuous concept if it were not based on a particular purpose and focused in a direction that was mutually valued by those within the network. Networking in the absence of purpose and direction is simply making friends. However, the concept of networking—or relationship-building—for a leader is a more precise and directed concept, which has two distinct parts.

The first is that networks, to be of any use in the classroom, must be focused—not only within a department, subject-matter area, or grade level—but according to purpose. In other words, those within a network know exactly why the network exists—why they have agreed to come together as friends and colleagues. This purpose may be specific (for example, to share visuals of Gothic and Baroque cathedrals of the sixteenth century, arithmetic
word problems for less-able learners, or spelling errors most commonly made
by fourth graders) or broad (for example, to explore ways of instilling the
lessons of medieval times into a world history course, remediate the
arithmetic reasoning errors of failing students, or make English grammar
and spelling more relevant at the elementary level). In other words, networks
of individuals formed around such topics have purpose and direction. They
may involve only a pair of teachers, but their aim is clear to all who are
involved.

It is interesting that teachers who become leaders are not always the
ones who propose the topics of networks. They are, however, the ones who
conceive of the idea of an ongoing relationship to fulfill some perceived in-
structional need that may be common to two or more individuals. In other
words, when a need surfaces from any source, they check the need against
their own list of needs, concerns, or problems and, if a match can be found,
begin the work of forming a relationship that can meet the common need.

Needs, of course, are not always centered around instructional tasks but
can also represent concerns about classroom management, school rules,
clerical duties, and inservice requirements. In each case, a network of in-
terested individuals comes together informally to share and often enlarge
each others’ perception of the need and then to provide ways of meeting the
need within the limited time and resources of its members. In this sense,
leaders in social units are seen as network builders-brokers between who has
what and who needs what-with themselves and their own needs in the middle.
In other words, they get out of the network just what everyone else gets out of
it-no more, no less. They are not disinterested matchmakers who do not share
in the rewards of the network.

The second part of a network is its capacity to serve all members
equally. This can be a difficult ingredient to arrange, as some networks more
easily serve some members than others, resulting in jealousy and resentment
toward those who gain the most. It goes without saying that networks in
which not all members derive some benefit do not last very long. This is
where leadership skills in creating a network count the most. If the network
is built only on the needs of the network initiator, probably there will be no
network. If it is built on the needs of only a few who consistently utilize the
resources of others, resentment, concealment, and eventual abandonment of
the network results. The key is to network only for topics that fulfill a
common purpose and to select network participants who have comparable
amounts of time, energy, and resources to devote to the network.

Networking is one of the clearest distinctions of a leader in a unit.
Leaders are at the hub of many different networks, giving and taking about
equally from each. It is possible then to see why leaders are successful
teachers-they have at their disposal the resources of many other individuals
and are not afraid to invest their time to form a partnership or network that
can improve their teaching as well as the teaching of others with whom they
are willing to share their resources, time, and expertise.
Leveraging

A basic characteristic of leadership is leveraging. Networks are a kind of leveraging, which simply means trying to achieve the greatest results with the least effort and resources. Notice that without networks of colleagues sharing materials, experience, and expertise, the work of each individual would be increased exponentially. More often than not, the extra work needed to match the contributions of others, if provided on one's own, would be far too time-consuming.

Leveraging works in many ways. Simply put, leaders are known for finding shortcuts that work and then communicating them to others. This is one of the reasons they are respected and admired by others in their unit.

Leveraging is a difficult topic to discuss, because it can be confused with laziness—that familiar phenomenon that represents shortcuts that don't work. Laziness means, "I'm going to skip that, not grade this, or ignore something that should be attended to, regardless of the effect." Leveraging may indeed look like some of these, but its effects are of paramount importance. It is, of course, possible that skipping that, not grading this, or ignoring something could promote more significant and desirable results in some other area. To stick steadfastly to something without regard to effect is tantamount to not doing what should be done in the first place. Successful teachers, especially those who are leaders in their units, leverage all the time. They know when not to do something as well as when to do something. They realize that plans can be altered, but results cannot. That, of course, is one of the primary benefits of being results-oriented—once you know what results you want, convention and routine can be replaced with what works, and what works in today's classrooms may be anything but conventional and routine.

The problem we are exploring is when to break from convention and tradition to achieve the results you want. Only so many hours exist in a school day and students can receive only so many hours of instruction. We can not extend the school day, beg for more time, or wish for brighter or better-behaved students. The effects you want on learners must be obtained in the midst of these and many other constraints on you and your classroom. For the successful teacher, the answer to this dilemma lies in the concept of leveraging, which employs the idea of doing something small—almost always unconventional—to achieve large results. This can only come by breaking from tradition, since your superintendent, school principal, and department chair cannot remake the constraints under which you must work or provide the much-needed resources that can transform your classroom into a haven for success.

Leveraging takes many forms—some of which would bring looks of disparagement from less-experienced teachers who have yet to discover them. Leveraging is what many successful teachers do occasionally but never talk
about. It is like running a stoplight when driving your wife to the hospital to have a baby, not painting under the eaves in the back of your house because nobody will see them, having to wear two different colors of socks but pulling your cuffs down so nobody will notice. All are a bit unconventional and some may even break the rules—but notice that each achieves an effect supposedly unattainable under the conditions at hand. In the classroom leveraging might mean:

• Skipping course content that won't be understood by your learners, so that you can go back over the basics
• Giving a test you may not have time to grade, to keep students on-task
• Signing the attendance roster without checking for absences, because you want to give your students extra time to take a test
• Overlooking a student's misbehavior, to gain his cooperation at another time
• Rejuvenating your sagging spirits by putting off grading papers to spend time with your family

Here again, the emphasis is on a small event that could have important consequences many times larger than the event itself. Notice also that leveraging almost always requires a response that is not part of convention and tradition. The will and adeptness to use this is often the difference between being wise and being intelligent. When forced to make a choice, the successful teacher always chooses the former, and in so doing is seen by others as being the later.

Empowering

Another characteristic of leaders is that they empower others to act in their own behalf. In short, they give strength and confidence to others, just as they were encouraged by other leaders at some time in their lives.

How do leaders empower others to act on their own behalf? Although networking and the role leaders play in bringing networks into being play a role, these alone are not sufficient to empower others to act, even when it is in their own best interests. Anyone who has witnessed the large number of individuals who become participants but not contributors will appreciate the distinction between mechanisms for allowing others to participate (networks) and those that actually motivate people to expend their valuable time and energy to contribute. In other words, it is never difficult to get a sizable number of individuals in a unit to acknowledge their need for a network. It is, however, quite another thing to get some members, who will join for social recognition or appearances, to contribute actively to the purpose of
a network, even when to do so will benefit their own goals. The problem, of course, is the time and energy even the smallest responsibility beyond normal teaching duties may require. Networks require time and energy to be mutually reinforcing and beneficial, and this subtracts from the time and energy needed by normal teaching duties. This is why many will want to join networks, but not all who join will contribute to a network’s maintenance and welfare. For this they must be empowered by something greater than a call to join forces with others in a unit to fulfill a purpose. Networks, therefore, need not only participants but also leaders who keep them running and effective. Leaders must have an ability to inspire others to act, to take the responsibility for acting in their own best interests, even when time and energy must be found and reassigned to an activity which heretofore had not been a part of the teacher’s normal routine.

How does a leader inspire and invoke a new responsibility to act in the midst of a comforting and long-established routine? To accomplish this, leaders know how to share and delegate responsibility in ways that foster the goals of those around them. This is a different sort of behavior from the way most teachers receive committee assignments or extra chores from their administrators, who often divide the tasks at hand in the fairest possible manner. If Ms. X has to do this for the betterment of our unit, then it is only fair that Mr. Y and Ms. Z complete comparable tasks. Notice that the goal of most administrators will be to be fair, sharing the burden as evenly as possible among individuals or being sure to rotate the unwelcome tasks from one individual to another. There is no inspiration or empowerment here, just fairness and a call to get the job done. The result is usually a lackluster performance by all concerned.

Leaders approach the delegation of responsibility in a different manner. For this they must find ways to allow inspiration to rise up from within the individual, rather than being applied from the outside. Even the definition of inspiration denotes a spirit or process that starts from within the individual—not from the individual’s context or situation, although its effects there will eventually be seen. How is this done?

Leaders take the time to know the individuals with whom they work. This knowledge, however, is not the glib sort of knowledge we all learn about through casual conversations with our peers, but a knowledge that reflects the unique strengths and interests of those around them. Their agenda is to inspire a contribution to a network or social unit in ways that tap into the participants’ own strengths and interests. This means first taking the time to learn everyone’s unique strengths and interests, and then checking the understanding of them over time. For example, an effective leader could complete the following inventory with some confidence by circling the one word in each numbered row that best captures the unique strengths and interests of each member of his or her social unit. Try completing the following for a colleague with whom you are particularly close.
Chapter Eleven

1. acceleration   compassion   completeness
2. advancement   improvement   thoroughness
3. creativity    restoration   maintenance
4. illumination  tolerance     respect
5. accomplishment self-sufficiency productivity
6. articulation  understanding  application
7. effects       communication cohesion
8. contribution  involvement   focus
9. vision        hope          performance
10. competition  practice      organization

If you are typical, you will have spent some time agonizing over your responses, since the choices were made to be thought-provoking and difficult. That is the point—you really have to know someone well—their innermost thoughts and feelings—to make a choice.

Many of us would have difficulty choosing one word in each row that best represents our own strengths and interests. They are all such wonderful words and not to choose them all might appear to be undeserving of being a teacher. This is precisely the type of information, unadorned by glib phrases and casual conversation, that inspires one to act. The truth is that there is a word in each row that best characterizes our strengths and interests, and by choosing it we do not reject the importance of the others. We do, however, prioritize some of our innermost feelings, and this prioritization is what must be done in order to expend time and energy we do not have on tasks and activities that are not a part of our normal routines. An effective leader might share and delegate responsibility with a knowledge of how individual group members represent the qualities in the above list. He or she might, for example, create a profile of you by placing all the words circled (ten in all) in a single line from which a sentence beginning with, "She or he is most concerned with . . ." is written, to capture the most prominent motif among the words selected. There is no reason why department chairs, principals, and others who must empower people to act on behalf of their units should not delegate responsibilities from a similar depth of understanding of those they wish to inspire. In other words, inspiration and a willingness to act are best promoted from a perspective that ties the responsibility to the strengths and interests of the individual—and the personal purpose for which that individual is teaching.

Most department heads, principals, and other administrators seldom ask faculty what their strengths and interests are—or what they would like to be teaching five years from now. The reason is, of course, that they are afraid that they cannot and will not be able to accommodate these preferences and interests—so why open a can of worms? In feeling this, they miss the point. It’s their caring to know who you are that’s important. Few teachers expect their wishes and dreams to become reality, at least not overnight, but
every teacher expects and has the right to expect that those they are to follow-their leaders-care about and will take the time to learn about their aspirations for a job at which they work up to ten hours a day and will continue to do so with dedication for low pay for most of their lives. Knowing their teachers' personal strengths and interests will allow leaders to seize opportunities that may occur in the future to unleash hidden energies and motivation for their department and school.

Innovating

Our final characteristic of leaders is that they are innovators. They are artists at changing and thinking flexibly, coming up with fresh ideas, and, sometimes most important, taking advantage of unexpected events. Innovating lies at the heart of personal growth and much of what I have said about it here. Innovations do not come from inservice lectures, coursework, or even the professional literature. There you will hear and read about the innovations that worked for others, which may or may not be adaptable to your classroom. Leaders know this and that is why they do not rely on innovations that come from some external source, but instead develop their own mechanisms that can provide an endless supply of innovations for themselves. These innovations for the most part differ from new approaches, strategies, techniques, media, curriculum, etc., that are often touted as innovations from above.

The innovations we are about to consider are small in comparison to anything that would capture the attention of inservice programs. They cost little in time and energy. Let's explore how leaders provide such a steady stream of innovations and what some of them might look like in your classroom. Recall that effective teachers combine playfulness, concentration, flow, and their own affect to form images from which they choose in responding to the stimulus field. This process requires them to become vulnerable, to focus on the actions and reactions of their students, to lay to rest the judgmental observations of Self 1, and to allow themselves to select their actions from feelings created by the stimulus field. This later process-called affect imaging-provides the variety of thinking and responding out of which innovations-new and flexible responses-come.

Some teachers rarely tap this source for new ideas and creative alternatives. Instead they wait, mostly in vain, for ideas to come from a source from outside themselves, ignoring their own feelings of what feels right, looks appropriate, or might work at a given time and place. They do not wish to be vulnerable, are not concentrating on the stimulus field, are afraid of the critical judgment of Self 1, and are not comfortable with and/or sensitive
to their own feelings. These teachers are the least likely to innovate or change from the comfort of a routine in which they have entombed themselves for much of their professional lives. Not coincidentally, they also are teachers who lack purpose and belief in themselves, to the point that they fail to derive either meaning or satisfaction from their life’s work.

Our notion of innovation, then, strikes at the heart of teaching. It is not what some textbooks tell us—that innovations in teaching represent big changes that come from sources outside the classroom, most often involving some technology or method. Real innovations—those that affect teaching the most and last the longest—are little changes that come from teachers, by virtue of their responsiveness to the stimulus field.

Although all the previous stages are necessary—vulnerability, concentration, and nonjudgmental observation—the key stage in which innovation actually occurs is affect imaging. This is the time in which the affective buffer is consulted for its endless variety of responses, many of which have never before been brought into use—or, more correctly, created. In other words, if the stimulus field presents a critical condition or need for a response, energy is released within us to look for the proper reaction. This responsive Self 2 mechanism resides within us all if we are sensitive to it and are willing to call it into action. It is at this moment that effective teachers are separated from ineffective. The ineffective go back to their memory of experiences and schoolhouse learning for the proper response. Effective teachers probe the depths of their affective buffers to come up with a feeling tone or image that, once made conscious, tells them what to do. There is little difference between the effective and ineffective teacher save for what happens at this moment—the last stage of our process. The effective teacher’s response requires the same memory of experiences and schoolhouse learning as does the ineffective teacher’s. The difference is that the ineffective teacher consults the experiences and schoolhouse learning accumulated in Self 1 directly, while the effective teacher uses them only as contributors to an affective image or feeling tone stored within the affective buffer.

Self 2 has no direct knowledge of experiences and schoolhouse learning, so it cannot look to familiar categories to discover the right response. It must build a response from what it sees in the affective buffer, and what it sees are feelings formed from events in the stimulus field and images in the buffer that cannot be traced to their original source. From this process comes the variety that promotes growth and change—and an appropriate response to the stimulus field. It is the same process of creating innovative responses and thinking flexibly that is required in a disordered environment of rapid cycles of value change. It is the only process that can, in a rapid-fire decision-making setting, match the variety inherent in the stimulus field with variety of equal intensity and magnitude to return a disordered environment to a steady and predictable state.
The ability to innovate—to create order out of disorder—is not lost on members of a social unit. They look and listen for just such a show and take for themselves what may be of use in their own classrooms. Call them little nuggets of ingenuity, tips, or best practices—they are what teachers search for in their peers, whether or not they are freely offered. Leaders do not offer these nuggets of ingenuity, tips, or best practices to peers—they allow them to come to the attention of their peers. They talk freely about their successes and failures, tell stories and anecdotes about what is happening in their classroom, and share their experiences with networks of friends and colleagues. It is from these events that innovations of the best kind are communicated and shared.

Mentors

One form of leadership that is increasingly recognized is mentoring. Mentoring comes in many varieties, although the most obvious occurs during the supervision of student teachers and formal inservice programs conducted with beginning teachers. Beginning with Odysseus' decision to entrust the education and development of his son to a wise and learned man named Mentor, mentoring has been the process of enabling others to act, of building upon their strengths. Teachers perform this role all the time, and teachers who are specifically performing as mentors make this role overt for others to see. Mentoring is displaying one's leadership to a specifically chosen candidate and in this sense is much like the job of a coach. The mentor-mentee relationship is a negotiated partnership between experienced teacher and beginning teacher. As in any relationship between professionals, the thoughts, concerns, and interests of both parties are critical to its success.

Knowledge of the most effective characteristics of mentors has come from those who have been helped by a mentoring relationship. Their accounts (Peters & Austin, 1986) add a flavor to mentoring that few articles or research studies have been able to match in conveying what mentoring is. Here is what some mentees have said about the mentors that have helped them the most.

- Challenges me to do my best
- Sets a good example
- Never divulges a confidence
- Explains the reasons for instructions and procedures
- Helps me polish my skills before I have to present them to others
- Lets me make my own decisions
- Cares about me and how I am doing
- Doesn't seek the limelight
- Won't let me give up
Gives specific guidance and direction when I am trying something new
Keeps a results (student impact) orientation
Always lets me know where I stand
Listens exceptionally well
Keeps the promises he or she makes
Works as hard or harder than anyone else
Is proud of those he or she has helped
Gives credit where credit is due
Never says, "I told you so"
Corrects my performance in private
Never flaunts authority
Uses language that is simple and easy to understand
Really wants to hear my ideas, and acts on them
Lets me set my own deadlines
Celebrates my successes
Don't hide bad news
Gives me enough time to prepare
Wants me to "stretch" my skills
Gives me his or her full attention during discussions, won't be distracted
Has a sense of humor
Says "we" instead of "I"
Believes in me and that I can do it
Readily communicates his or her philosophy and values
Is willing to act on intuition; believes feelings are facts

These characteristics of good mentoring share many of the characteristics we have already discussed. Simply put, effective mentors are at Stage 3 in their professional development—they focus on their impact on students and have discovered for themselves the professional satisfaction and meaning that come from personal growth. They have become conscious of their affective buffer and the feeling images within it that allow them to respond creatively and sensitively to the behavior of others, without relying on convention or tradition. Above all, they have a purpose for teaching and a belief in themselves that are obvious to their mentee.

Seldom recognized is the fact that leaders become better leaders in the context of a mentoring relationship. In other words, the personal growth that comes to the mentee is returned in kind to the mentor, who necessarily is challenged by having to communicate his or her purpose and confidence in self, as well as needed instructional skills and strategies. Mentoring is a hardship and a burden that often exceeds any material reward that may be provided, but it is from this hardship that growth occurs for mentor as well as the mentee.

Some mentors learn nothing whatsoever from their relationship with
their mentees. Instead of seizing the opportunity for new responses within themselves, they use it as an opportunity to follow their familiar, well-worn path and require it of the less-experienced teachers with whom they are working. They place the mentoring experience in the context of a command structure with themselves at the top. There is no semblance of a mutually productive relationship marked by the characteristics of successful mentors listed above. These ineffective mentors have five characteristics in common, which shut out any possibility for growth for either mentor or mentee.

1. They encourage too much dependence on themselves. They confuse mentoring with parenting.
2. They use their mentor role to control rather than to guide. The mentor becomes the source of all decisions.
3. They shield the mentee from both mistakes and successes. The mentors don’t use the energy needed to deal with unexpected behavior or events.
4. They tell the mentee only what they themselves want to hear. They use the opportunity to play back for themselves the perceived merits of their own behavior.
5. They are threatened by exceptional ability or skill. They ignore behaviors that are not like their own.

These are what I call the blind spots of mentoring. They are rarely acknowledged by those who have them and who often work to squelch any semblance of growth or change that could come to either mentor or mentee. Yet many of the relationships between mentors and mentees and between student teachers and their supervisors can be described as having one or more of these characteristics. Needless to say, these mentors and supervising teachers are not leaders. Since they have not discovered for themselves a purpose for teaching and a belief in themselves, they are the least likely to foster these qualities in another.

We return once again to the two qualities necessary for personal growth: a purpose for teaching that expresses who you are and a belief in yourself for carrying out the purpose in a form and manner of your own choosing. Leaders not only have discovered these qualities for themselves; they encourage them in those with whom they work. In other words, if institutions that train teachers do not instill purpose and belief in their students, one of the few remaining ways this process can begin is in a mentoring relationship—during either student teaching or an inservice program. This, however, will require the transmission of values from mentor to mentee in an otherwise value-neutral classroom. We do not wish the mentee to accept the mentor’s values, but to see these as the basis for forming a purpose and conviction that can guide their own behavior through the initial turbulent
years of teaching. The values that show the mentee what you live for and why you teach are the most important commodity of a mentor-mentee relationship. All leaders have values, but only effective leaders communicate them in ways that inspire others to find their own values. This is the true essence of mentoring.

Partners

In today's disordered environment there is the need for yet another kind of relationship in schools, called "partnering." Although less formal than mentoring, partnering can reflect personal growth in much the same way as mentoring. Best of all, while the opportunities to be a mentor are often limited to a few, the opportunities to partner are unlimited and open to all.

"Teaming" is an old-fashioned word for partnering, but it has a new and different twist. "Teaming" used to be a popular term for a formal relationship among two or more teachers in one instructional role. Partnering is the informal relationship between two teachers in a supportive role. Let's examine these important differences and how partnering can promote the personal growth necessary for teaching in today's classrooms.

In its simplest form, partnering is choosing a friend from the social unit of which you are a member, with whom you can share your thoughts and feelings. Every teacher in every unit should have a partner. Some partnerships can arise naturally out of long-held friendships, as many do, or they may be created by another at the department, subject-matter area, or grade level. For those who have not found partners naturally, a small group of teachers can be assigned the task of choosing partners for members of their unit from brief descriptive summaries of subject matter interests, instructional goals, statements of purpose, and special interests that may or may not be classroom-related. The success of partnering depends on common interests, shared values, and trust among partners that must be conscientiously considered by whatever process partners are chosen.

Common interests: Partners should get excited about the same things.

Shared values: Partners have to believe that what they do can make a difference.

Emotional support: Partners have to trust each other enough to reveal their most personal thoughts and wishes.

The goal of partnering is to develop a long-term, trusting relationship that is mutually beneficial. In today's hectic classrooms this mutual benefit should take two forms.
The first and often most important goal of partnering is to establish a mutually beneficial and emotionally supportive relationship. This goal may have nothing to do with your instructional goals. It means making a difference in your partner's life, sharing in a nonthreatening way your basic fears, hopes, and aspirations. This part of a partnering relationship deals with deep issues, like the stability of marriage, spouse's problems at work, turmoil with children, issues of health and well-being, or contemplated career changes. If sufficient trust does not exist to open up these areas in the context of private and confidential dialogue, the partnering relationship will neither be strong enough nor helpful enough to contribute to each other's teaching. Why? Because the potential for embarrassment and threat is every bit as great in the context of your professional life in the classroom as it is in your personal life at home. If you can not share and trust at a personal level, you will never be able to share and trust at a professional level. In other words, partnering is caring for another individual, both personally and professionally.

This deeply personal and psychological side of teaching is rarely understood by those outside the classroom-including some who make their living working in schools. It is the personal and psychologically draining aspects of teaching that make partnering such a necessity for all teachers, not just the less-experienced.

The rapid pace, immediacy of responding, management tasks, and social disruption that occur in many classrooms have given rise to the metaphor of the classroom as a war zone. Although the type of war being waged in many classrooms is different from those in history books, the effects on those who do battle may not be. It was widely reported by researchers in the mid-1970s that the psychological maladies being reported by teachers in some of the largest urban school districts appeared astonishingly similar to those found in soldiers returning from the front lines of the Vietnam War. Although the public may scoff at the proposed similarity, any teacher can easily see the relationship. Although the shots fired may be psychological, many hit their mark to demoralize, denigrate, and humiliate the teacher. Few other occupations except soldiering provide conditions for wounding the human psyche as much as does teaching. Our disorderly environment of rapid cycles of value change almost assures that this will occur for every teacher at some time and for most teachers many times. Simply put, it is the nature of the job, which can no longer banish conflicting values and variety from the stimulus field through rigid adherence to a single, prevailing value system. The result today is a kaleidoscope of possible classroom behavior, some of which is sure to touch upon the dignity of the teacher.

What is so little understood by those outside the teaching profession is how much the hectic environment of the classroom affects the teacher after the school day ends and sometimes before it begins. This is why partnering is so necessary and why it must play an emotionally supportive role in the
life of every teacher. As noted, teachers experience up to 1,000 verbal inter-
changes a day, a tightly managed schedule partitioned by loud bells, rapid-fire
responses to students' emotional and learning needs, few breaks to allow for
meaningful thought and reflection, and a regimented lunch, all of which spell
psychological duress unequalled in any other profession with similar
responsibility. Once these conditions are fully experienced—not once as a school
visitor, but every day of a teacher's professional career—there is little mystery as
to why researchers found the mental health of some teachers no better than that
of war-ravaged veterans. There the analogy may stop, since wars tend to end
and one can dream of a sweet homecoming, but a teacher's career seems
endless. This is the hidden psychological context in which much of our nation's
public school instruction takes place.

Unfortunately, home lives can be wrecked and marriages dissolve under such
psychological duress, especially when those at home have not experienced the
conditions under which the spouse works, or simply may be unwilling to accept
the psychologically and physically exhausting nature of the job. Conflicts at
home are one of the hidden costs of teaching, difficult to appreciate until you
have entered a teaching career. If the home cannot provide a respite from the
hectic demands of the day, giving at least some time free from the demands of
others, the problem will grow worse at home and in the classroom as well. A
school superintendent who requires spouses of new teachers to attend an
orientation to prepare them for the psychological needs of their mate would be a
rarity. Such a session might make spouses more appreciative of the condition of
their mate after even an uneventful day of teaching—lack of patience, need for
quiet, and physical exhaustion—which, if they are new to teaching, will surely be
noticed in the first months or weeks of the school year.

Partnering can also address this problem in another way. By providing an
emotionally supportive relationship, partners can help each other when no
other help is possible, especially in times of acute need brought on by special
problems in the classroom or home. Partners are sensitive to each other's moods
and are always on the lookout for where they can help—if not materially, then
assuredly with the emotional support every teacher needs and can only receive
from an intense, personal commitment to the well-being of another.

The importance of partnering is not only the emotional but also the intellectual
support it can provide. Talk among partners inevitably turns to shop talk about
teaching and learning—how to do this, what materials are best for that, what
content to emphasize, and what resources, materials, and tests are available.
One of the most beneficial results of partnering is finding out how things can be
done more easily and efficiently. When partners teach the same or similar
courses, partnership can even remove redundancies, reduce paperwork, and cut
the workload by mutual course preparation and the
sharing of responsibilities. No matter how small, this savings in time can be one of the best benefits of partnering.

Partnering, then, is the pairing of teachers who share common interests and values and are willing to trust their deepest feelings about their careers and personal lives to each other. Every teacher in every school should have a partner, either self-selected or assigned on the basis of shared interests and values. Similar statements of purpose could be a vehicle for matching peers when partners are not self-selected; similar instructional roles, duty assignments, subject-matter specializations, and special projects are other vehicles that can form the basis for partnering. A partnering relationship is a deep and unremitting concern for the welfare of another in the midst of an environment that does not have the time or patience to be concerned about much other than the status quo.

Partners can and should change over time, as benefits from the same partner diminish with time. Different ideas and perspectives from new partners are necessary to continue the growth process. Old partners need not be abandoned, just new partners added. In this manner, teachers retain old partners with whom they still console and consult, while adding partners to serve these same ends in new and different ways. Experience has shown that most partners of long standing are anxious to explore new horizons and fresh insights and experiences, without which the old partnership becomes stale. In other words, partnerships that expand to groups of three or four over time strengthen earlier relationships and also begin to build new ones. Over time, as new partners are added to old and greater numbers within the unit have multiple partnership roles, the unit itself grows stronger as each member becomes more comfortable with and learns to appreciate and benefit from the understanding of others.
In this chapter we pay Angela, Kurt, and Sheila a final visit. It has been five years since our first visit, and each has changed and grown in many different ways. Here a few of the changes with which we left Angela, Kurt, and Sheila at the end of our last visit.

Recall that Angela found a purpose for teaching that is all her own, giving her a new sense of direction and enthusiasm. She also established a closeness and openness with her mother that has become the vehicle for a new and valued source of emotional support. With her new first grade assignment, we see a concern for her impact on students beginning to overcome an earlier focus on self and task.

Kurt also was not immune from the forces of change. After beginning with an almost exclusive focus on the mechanics of teaching, he began to associate his actions with their effects on students. He is not only becoming student-centered, he is becoming results-oriented. With the aid of a new-found interest in curriculum, he began to make the important connection between his own behavior and that of his learners.

We began our portrait of Sheila as an experienced teacher who had been through it all. We followed Sheila through later stages of her career, during which she came to terms with her own boredom and frustrations after more than 14 years in the classroom. As did Angela and Kurt, Sheila had to deal with the nagging thought that maybe she should leave teaching—acquire another job with better pay and recognition or even retire altogether and assume a well-earned and more leisurely lifestyle. As we saw, Sheila chose neither of these alternatives. She informs us in this visit of some of the things that have kept her in the classroom and undoubtedly will continue to do so for some time to come. Let's look in on each now to see how they are developing in the middle and later years of their teaching careers.
Angela

You've asked me to tell you about some of the changes that I've gone through here at Kiesler. I've changed, but it's not been anything purposeful or organized, if you know what I mean. I feel I've been through a lot-sometimes I've enjoyed my time here and sometimes I haven't. Growing up a second time-as a teacher-isn't always pleasant. There's a lot I really didn't know about teaching when I first got here-the kind of things you can't learn in school. I guess every new teacher has to learn the hard way-by being hurt by your own helplessness-but it's painful when you start out not knowing who you really are and what type of teacher you want to be or even can be. All I can say is I'm a lot smarter now, and I wish somehow new teachers could gain from the experience of those of us who have been around for a while.

The thing that has helped me the most is getting to know who I really am-why I'm teaching. I have to say that teaching first grade has made all the difference in the world for me. I kept saying to myself that I liked my fifth-grade classes, but inside, my heart was telling me something else; I just wasn't listening. I kept seeing myself as someone who could teach any grade-it just happened that I got fifth graders. The truth is, I couldn't really be myself teaching those kids. Frankly, I was scared to teach them-really teach them-because I always felt it was kind of hopeless. Now, that's a terrible attitude, but you see my point. I had that feeling and it affected everything I did in the classroom. I couldn't really teach the low kids, so I basically would baby-sit them. I tried to cram a lot of course material down the throats of the other kids to make up for the ones I knew I wasn't reaching. I felt guilty but couldn't admit it.

I think having our first child opened my eyes to a lot of things. It made me appreciate myself more because it reminded me of the mother inside of me. I was very much influenced by my own mother when I was growing up, and I really never had a father to speak of. That made me and Mom very close all through my growing-up years. She nursed me along, helped me with school, taught me about the things you'd expect every good mother would do, but I think she did them better than most and under some of the worst conditions imaginable-no father and no real security. She just did them-instinctively and with a lot of love and caring. I think that really affected me because I learned a lot of those same qualities from her. Ever since I can remember, I wanted to be a teacher like her-and now a mother like her. But I never connected that feeling with my own teaching and the problems I was having until I was pregnant with Sarah. My instincts came to the
surface-kind of automatically—and I began thinking about how they would come out in the classroom. Then I realized these same instincts weren't working right in my classroom, even though I felt them inside. They made me think maybe I really didn't know myself very well—that I had two different personalities—the one inside me and the one I took to work every day.

Well, that really wasn't the case and anyone who knows me will tell you that. I'm one person and that person is very much like my mother and the person I remember when I was growing up. So when I decided to switch to first grade, I became myself again. It was the best thing I ever did, because I doubt if I would have stayed in teaching while I was trying to be someone I'm not. Leaving would have been a big mistake too, because I like teaching—I just had to find my place. The one thing I'm grateful for is having my mother to give me the courage to stick it out until I could find myself. If she hadn't shared her own experiences "growing up" as a new teacher in this same neighborhood, I wouldn't have had the guts to keep going. When we began to talk, not as mother and daughter but as teachers, I felt I had the kind of support no textbook could ever give me.

This year I've gotten a lot of this same kind of support from my partner. Since Mr. Arbutroff arrived, each of us has had to choose a partner who we would meet with to share experiences. Some people in the school didn't follow through, so Mr. Arbutroff made some selections himself. I have to say that because of it, the whole partnering idea has a mixed reputation around here. Some partners never meet or have little in common. But in my case, it's been a perfect transition from my mother—who always was and will be a partner—to someone right here in the school I can talk to every day. My partner is Mrs. Goliad, who teaches second grade, but before that, she taught first grade at another school. I'm lucky for that because for years she's used all the same books I'm using. She's saved me a lot of time by giving me the materials, handouts, and workbooks she used with her first-grade classes. That's raised some eyebrows around here, because they see me with things that didn't come from this school and wonder where I'm getting the stuff. Another teacher even asked if she could be my partner next year so we could share the materials.

I can't tell you how good I felt about myself when she asked. Word must have gotten around that I'm using a lot of supplements. To have another teacher want to learn from me—well, that was a real surprise. If you ask me, the partnering idea has made a big difference. So next year I'll have two partners plus Mom. I think I've found my niche here. I really think I'll turn out just like my mother—and, I bet, so will our daughter, Sarah.
Kurt

Since we talked, I've thought about some of the things you said—like why I changed schools. It's a long story, but what you probably don't know is that I didn't teach last year. Two years ago I left Stockton with the idea I'd never return. It's funny that I left when I did, because I enjoyed my last year there more than the others, but I wanted to try something new before I lost my nerve. I liked teaching, but I thought it just wasn't the kind of thing you did all your life if you really had your act together. It was always kind of embarrassing to me that I never had any other job, unlike some of my friends. So when the opportunity came, I took it.

I can't say it was a mistake, because it wasn't. It was a kind of experience that's hard to match when all you've ever done is teach school. I will say that it opened my eyes to some things I really never gave much thought to—what it's like to work out there versus in here. What I think affected me the most—what I really missed the most—was the feeling that somehow things are always changing here—they have to or else it's not a school. If you don't get better as a teacher, you don't survive; if your kids don't keep on learning, they don't pass the course; and if the curriculum doesn't change, it becomes outdated. That's the kind of change that's invisible—you don't see it, but it's there always working to make things better.

Well, last year I had the chance to manage an automobile tire store in a national chain. I got more pay, but the real reason I took the job is because I just wanted to try my hand at something other than teaching. I guess the idea of being in business appealed to me. I thought I'd like to be a manager and make the decisions managers make.

I have to say that the experience was very different—moving from teaching a class to managing a business. The first thing that struck me was that the routine I had to follow was fixed by people in the main office and that I really didn't make decisions of any importance. They had all been made for me, so that I didn't have to think very much. Selling tires, believe it or not, can be interesting. There's a lot to learn in dealing with customers, ordering, doing advertising—that sort of thing. I thought that part would be a lot more complex than teaching math, but to tell you the truth, you learn what you need to in a month, and after that everything stays the same. You keep doing the same thing; there aren't any new problems or decisions that have to be made that you haven't seen before. So you see, I had some illusions of what the business world was all about. To tell you the truth, I spent more time doing paperwork than I had done in the classroom.

I'd come home at night, and Carol and I would talk about how the
job was going, and I'd have nothing to say. When I was teaching there would always be something worth talking about. So after about a year of it, we both got the feeling I might have made a mistake. I called over to school administration to see if there were any openings at Stockton, but there weren't. Then about half-way into the summer I got a call about an opening here at Peabody. I left my job three weeks later. Looking back, I think it was a good thing, because this way I know I tried something different, even if it didn't work out. I see things a lot differently now and that makes it worth it.

Here at Peabody I'm the math coordinator for the school. That means I get to do some of the same things I was doing my last year at Stockton. As coordinator, it's natural for me to get involved in curriculum. One of my goals is to coordinate seventh- and eighth-grade math so that all the units for the more advanced courses are taught before the kids reach eighth grade. It wasn't that way at Stockton. Kids would come into my algebra class without the background they needed.

Here at Peabody we've created work groups to share ideas across the seventh and eighth grades. We divided up so that at least one seventh- and one eighth-grade teacher are in each group. We've had to double up on the groups because there are only four of us plus the science teachers. I remember sharing the curriculum unit I developed on probability with the seventh-grade teacher at Stockton, so I wanted to do something like it here. The idea is to share what we're doing—materials, visuals, handouts—before we revise anything, so we know what everyone else is doing. That way, I'm not as likely to get students in algebra who spend most of the time trying to catch up. This school is a feeder school for the science academy, so we get a lot of students eager to take all the math they can get. Another thing I want to do is to follow up our kids next year to see how well they do in their classes at the academy and then use the information to expand what we're doing. See what I mean by things always changing? You just don't see that happening in a lot of other jobs. That's what made me come back.

Sheila

It's hard to recall 16 years. Most really aren't very important and some of the others you already know about. If I had to point to any one thing in my life that has kept me teaching this long, I'd say it's my view of things. Some people always see the glass half full; others see it half empty. I think I'm one of those types—and maybe this sounds nuts—that keeps going back and forth-seeing it both ways but switching so fast that it doesn't really matter whether it's half full or half empty.
You see, sometimes the glass is half empty—which simply means I've got a problem or two and things aren't going right. I'd say half my days are like that. Then, I've got the other half; those are the days my problems are getting better and I feel pretty good that I'm on the right track and getting through to my kids. In a place like this, that feeling doesn't last very long because soon, along come more problems—Johnny flunks his makeup test, some of my kids decide they don't want homework, or the band director calls a bunch out of my class during the review for the test. Maybe you see what I mean? Every time things look good, something else comes along to upset it. So, I'm always moving up or down on some kind of wave that keeps rolling along. That's what I mean by switching between half full and half empty—except it happens so fast that who's got time to worry about it? I just want to stay afloat.

Now once you accept the bad with the good, it makes a whole lot of difference in your outlook. I stopped trying to create a perfect lesson, perfect test, perfect anything a long time ago. I deal with things as they come and I try to do the best I can. Sure, I want things to be perfect, but I'm not silly enough to think they're going to turn out that way, or that they necessarily always should. What I'm trying to say is that all the problems people see around here—and a lot of them are in my classroom—are only problems for a time. First they are problems, then they become opportunities to change and try something different—that's when the glass is half full again.

Once you accept the ups and downs of teaching—moving from a problem to a solution—you can start to control when and how things should change. You don't want to stay in problems too long so you get moving on a solution—watch what happens—and then keep alert for another problem. Good teaching isn't presenting course content, like everyone thinks. It's moving in cycles of problems and solutions. My job isn't to teach in the old-fashioned sense—it's to look and listen to see what's happening in my classroom and then to react to what I see by creating alternatives. I accept that everything is always moving, changing; that's what keeps me going.

I think that's the single most important difference between a new teacher and an experienced one. The new teachers don't see the changes they can make. Every problem becomes some big burden because it isn't what was expected or what they've been taught or what they want to believe. So they get stuck on believing the glass is always half empty. Then what happens is that they get demoralized by it—lose their balance and their flexibility to respond. If you don't have solutions—try things out—everything looks gloomy. We have plenty of teachers like that around here and they're not all new teachers. To make things work in
a school like this, you have to risk a lot—always being creative and innovating to provide an answer to a problem you've never seen before. I'm working with two first-year teachers right now and it's interesting to see how some of these ideas come across to them. I've given a lot of thought to what I tell them and I try to skip a lot of the busywork. At first I'm not sure they know what to make of me. They give me those looks that say, "Is she for real?"

First, I want them to be independent enough to start creating solutions of their own, but almost immediately they want me to tell them what to do. They think I have the answer to whatever's happening in their classroom because I've been teaching so long, but I want them to choose a solution for themselves. Well, right there we have a problem—they think there's only one right way of doing things and that I discovered it and am keeping it to myself. What I discovered is that in this business there are very few right answers, and those who claim to have them usually don't. The best thing new teachers can learn is to play their own game, learn to create and innovate until they get their classes going in the direction they want. I ask them to become idea generators and to keep trying new things until they get their students responding the way they want. I can help them with this tip or that shortcut, but to tell you the truth, that part is easy. It's getting them to accept their own power to change things—flip things from half empty to half full on a moment's notice—that's the hard part. A new teacher needs to learn to risk doing things out of the ordinary.

What's interesting is that for those around here who don't know themselves or even why they're here—they wind up hating teaching or burning out and going on cruise control for the rest of their lives. They keep waiting for some kind of reward that never comes. They don't know why they're teaching, so when things get tough and the rewards don't come as often as they'd like, they feel cheated. If they had been teaching to accomplish something that they couldn't do in another job, they might not have felt that way. But that would require a purpose for teaching that's their own and a belief in themselves to make them risk going out on a limb for it. A lot of young teachers today don't have a purpose that can make their teaching distinctive. So the first thing I do is help them find a purpose.

Reflections

In this chapter we visited Angela, Kurt, and Sheila five years after our first visit. The seeds of change we saw in earlier visits have now taken hold to
provide a direction for growth in their lives. Let's look at them once again, to place in perspective the changes that have taken place.

**Angela**

Angela has come a long way from who she was five years ago. Her initial years of teaching were not easy, nor are they for many beginning teachers. The surprising thing is that she is still teaching and teaching with a purpose. What brought these changes about during her first years of teaching?

Angela has experienced the growth that many talk about, but only some are able to experience in their initial years of teaching. What may be more important is that Angela has begun to acquire a process from which growth continually springs-changing as necessary to meet the demands of her classroom, whatever they may be. Let's look at some of the changes that have created Angela's growth.

Although it took several turbulent years, Angela increasingly grew to know herself-to blend two personalities that were in conflict. As Angela describes it:

> My instincts came to the surface-kind of automatically-and I began thinking about how they would come out in the classroom. Then I realized these same instincts weren't working right in my classroom, even though I felt them inside. They made me think maybe I really didn't know myself very well-that I had two personalities-the one inside and the one I took to work.

At the heart of the conflict was Angela's belief that her fifth-grade assignment limited her approach to teaching-forcing her to focus more on the presentation of course content than on teaching the whole child. As she lamented earlier, her fifth graders were impervious to change as a result of their age and the sobering environment in which many had already grown up. She felt confined to teaching prescribed lesson content, leaving little time to focus on the development of social skills, responsibility, moral behavior, and presumably other adult qualities she felt her learners would need in the world outside of school. As Angela describes herself, she is both mother and teacher to her learners and her move to the first grade allowed these two parts of her to come together more harmoniously than in her fifth grade classroom. The change in assignment was just the release she needed to (as she put it) get to know who she really was:

> The thing that has helped me the most is getting to know who I really am-why I'm teaching. I have to say that teaching first grade has made all the difference in the world for me.
Discovering who she is—what she really wants out of teaching—has gone a long way in helping Angela become a self-motivated teacher. Reflections on her own childhood, spurred by the upcoming birth of her first child, helped to make the a close and meaningful connection between her own motherly instincts and her approach to teaching. She discovered a philosophy of teaching that grew in part out of her fifth-grade classroom, her childhood experiences, and the neighborhood in which her students are growing up. With this philosophy, Angela discovered a purpose for teaching that was unique to her instincts and childhood experience. She knew what she wanted from her students and could now set out to achieve it with a purpose and direction that were all her own.

Angela's relationship with her mother has also played a significant role in Angela's life. From duty-bound respect, Angela developed a relationship that transcended her daughterly obligations. She became one with her mother by reaching out to share her experiences and, after doing so, found that her mother's experience was similar to her own, even after years of teaching. Now they could not only relate as mother and daughter but as teachers with a common purpose and direction. This broadened their relationship to one in which advice, support, and sharing could become the core of mutual professional respect.

Angela's network of advice, support, and sharing expanded through partnering. This provided Angela the opportunity to complement her mother's role in a more immediate and perhaps even more relevant context. It also began a transition to the later stages of her career when her mother would no longer be available to help. Angela was learning to reach out to people other than her mother—and luckily for her the result could not have been better. Mrs. Goliad's rich store of materials for teaching first grade became a goldmine of opportunity, but the rewards were not limited to the classroom. As Angela recalls:

Another teacher even asked if she could be my partner next year just so we could share materials. I can't tell you how good I felt about myself when she asked to be my partner. To have another teacher want to learn from me—well, that was a real surprise.

Angela has come a long way from her first year in the classroom. Not only has she found a purpose, but with it she has begun to acquire a belief in herself. Although we can expect Angela's life to change in many ways in the ensuing years, she will be guided by much of what she has learned in these first years of teaching. We can expect Angela to look increasingly inward to her own instincts and feelings—for the answers she needs and in so doing, become responsive to the world around her.
Kurt

We see in this visit that Kurt has undergone no less of a change. Kurt's regimented approach to teaching has given way to a more responsive and innovative style. As with Angela, the change has not been easy. For Kurt it took some major changes in both his professional and personal life to provide the impetus to grow into something less predictable than that to which he had been accustomed. Two false starts—one at studying administration and another at entering the world of business—accounted for a broadening of Kurt's perspective. As a result of returning to school, he learned of other interests more powerful in directing his own behavior than becoming an administrator. Recall that earlier Kurt believed that change could only come from a position of authority. Believing that change was necessary, he began acquiring the credentials to become an administrator but discovered that another, heretofore hidden and more genuine interest eclipsed his earlier ambition. Kurt found that his interest in change could also be applied to his own teaching, as when he completed a curriculum on probability for his university coursework. Thus, Kurt redefined his notion of change from one that had to come from a position of authority to one that could come from his own individual achievements.

Kurt's brief excursion into the business world provided a similar change in outlook. This time his actions brought him to the realization that with teaching there is a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction that is not always present in the world of business. In his words:

What I think affected me the most—what I really missed the most—was the feeling that somehow things are always changing here—they have to or else it's not a school.

Kurt found that his journey into the world of business actually afforded him less flexibility to make decisions and to think for himself than did teaching. He found his junior high classroom considerably different than managing a small business, where to his surprise, the routine was fixed. This provided an eye-opening experience for Kurt, who was sure the world outside the classroom would be more challenging than the world he had come to know as a teacher. Kurt came to realize that

If you don't get better as a teacher, you don't survive; if your kids don't keep on learning, they don't pass the course; and if the curriculum doesn't change, it becomes outdated.

Kurt was learning that schools, and teachers, too, are accountable—and in some ways more so than the world outside. Kurt began to feel challenges in his own classroom that he thought could only be found elsewhere.
With this understanding, Kurt began to shift from an exclusive focus on the task of teaching to one that included his impact on students. Although this shift began with a unit on probability, it continued with his new position at Peabody. Kurt was beginning to find his own purpose for teaching, and that included improving the curriculum— for which he took personal responsibility as math coordinator for his school. Along with this purpose came a focus on students. His goal was to arrange the math sequence in such a way that students would have all the prerequisite knowledge required for more advanced courses, a condition he acknowledged did not exist at his earlier school. Now we see that Kurt's solution has changed, indicating a shift toward a concern for his impact on students. Kurt's new emphasis is on sequencing the curriculum so that deficiencies won't occur, eliminating a need to weed students out of more advanced classes—including some who could legitimately benefit from them. Now we see Kurt enacting change through his own innovative behavior.

Finally, we can note Kurt's use of work groups in his role as curriculum coordinator. Recall how Kurt was cautious about sharing his ideas with peers at his earlier assignment. Now networks of peers are formed to help him coordinate changes in the curriculum. From them comes a sense of discussion and sharing, which under his direction represents a reaching-out beyond himself for solutions that he alone might not have been able to provide.

Kurt has come a long way. Not only has he found a sense of purpose through his efforts at curriculum coordination, but also a focus on students. Although Kurt's life may undergo many more changes in the years ahead, they may in part be guided by the satisfaction of knowing that he can promote change from within his own classroom and that from his role as a teacher there are countless ways in which he can become a leader and innovator. These will present challenges and opportunities that may keep Kurt in the classroom for a long time to come.

Sheila

Like Angela and Kurt, Sheila has also changed. Although her changes have been more subtle, they have nevertheless brought Sheila to new heights of consciousness about her role as a teacher and mentor. We began with Sheila in her eleventh year of teaching and, now, five years later, we see her reflecting on what she believes makes a good teacher. She uses the analogy of a glass half empty or half full to describe the many problems faced by teachers—especially new teachers—and the challenges and opportunities into which those problems can be converted.

The idea of challenges and opportunities has been a recurrent theme throughout our visits with Sheila. As an experienced teacher, she knows one
thing for sure—no one can look for an easy ride. Classrooms are far too complex for that—just what Kurt discovered when he found the routine and orderliness in the business world was no match for the variety and unpredictability of a classroom. Sheila tells the young teachers she is mentoring not to expect the orderliness they may have experienced at other times of their lives—at college, in the home, with family, or in other jobs. Sheila's point goes beyond a simple forecast of the reality they can expect—and are now experiencing—to include a frame of mind or attitude that accepts problems as building blocks for change. We need only recall Kurt's excursion into the world of business to sense that it was the challenges and unpredictability of teaching that brought him back to the classroom after only a year. Sheila's message to her protegés is that an opportunity is the flip side of a problem. You can't have one without the other. Both are needed to survive and prosper, in life as well as in the classroom. This is why Sheila describes the job of teaching as half empty and half full. The reality that Sheila portrays is that it will always be both. Beginning and experienced teachers alike must come to expect ups as well as downs, well into their teaching careers.

The important part of Sheila's message may be that the job of teachers is to accept the task of teaching as always moving between problem and solution. In fact, she goes so far as to say that only the movement from one to the other and back again is sufficient to keep one interested in teaching and responsive to the stimulus field. Those who choose to see only problems without venturing forth with their own solutions preclude challenge and opportunity, as we saw Angela and Kurt doing in their early years. For Angela the process of change—from problem to solution—was not a feature of her teaching style. She was unrealistic as to how change occurred, believing it should come from outside her classroom rather than from within her own repertoire of responses. Change became unlikely—sometimes impossible—because she did not see that the most important source of change was her own behavior.

Kurt, on the other hand, avoided change altogether, but by always believing that the glass was half full. By creating an orderly classroom in which nothing new or different could occur, Kurt created an environment in which the variety of life—and of his students—could never interfere with his own need for the safety afforded by regularity. In the meantime he was shutting out much of the reality of the classroom—that side of life that could only make possible the challenge and opportunity he really wanted. He too, like Angela, had no mechanism for crossing back and forth from problem to solution, to encounter the challenges and opportunities that could make him responsive to the stimulus field. Instead, he artificially altered the stimulus field and with it much of the natural variety of response that lay within both him and his students.

Whether instinctively or through experience, Sheila senses that teaching
is a process, not a product. That is why she saw the need to train the teachers under her supervision to be responsive to the need for change from whatever direction it might come. In her words:

To make things work in a school like this you have to risk a lot of things—always create and innovate to provide answers to a problem you've never seen before.

For Sheila, her classroom—every effective classroom—is always in the process of revealing problems and always in the process of resolving them, and so is always changing. The difference between beginning and experienced teachers is how they accept the inevitability of change. New teachers like Angela become immobilized by the need for change—change they feel ill-equipped to bring about by themselves. They lose the ability to respond, to be flexible enough to create and innovate, and to start the pendulum swinging in the opposite direction. Since they have yet to find a purpose, they are reluctant to risk anything, comfortable with convention and tradition, which in times of challenge and opportunity can never be responsive to the stimulus field. For Sheila, starting the pendulum swinging is what teaching is all about. For her, problems in the stimulus field create the variety out of which her creativity and innovation spring.

Experienced teachers accept the swing of the pendulum and are always pushing it back when it comes their way. The difference between beginning and experienced teachers is that the beginning teacher quickly runs out of traditional responses that can push the pendulum back, because he or she has only the responses from schoolhouse learning or experience. These are finite and limited, and in today’s world of rapid cycles of value change become inadequate even in the first few months of teaching. Experienced teachers, on the other hand, have learned how to create responses of their own in untold variety and number to match the variety from the stimulus field. Because their responses come from within, they do not have to fit any existing shape or mold. In time, the experienced teacher barely notices which way the pendulum is swinging. Its movement alone is what is important, bringing a rhythm to the classroom, the unmistakable challenge and opportunity that every effective teacher instinctively follows.

Sheila in her role as a mentor passes much of this advice on to her proteges by calling on them to become independent decision makers.

The best thing new teachers can learn is to play their own game, learn to create and innovate until they get their classes going where they want them. I ask them to become idea generators.
Sheila is struggling to get her beginning teachers to accept their own power of conviction. This power comes from finding their own purpose-personal and private reasons why they want to be teachers. She tells her proteges to stop looking for messages from above or for some reward and instead to look to themselves for the reasons they are teaching and their own rewards.

To survive you have to be driven by a purpose and conviction and ready to go out on a limb for it. That means being an innovator every day of your life so that you can achieve some purpose that keeps you in teaching-makes it all worthwhile without getting a whole lot of tangible rewards. Those around here who don't know themselves, haven't found a purpose, don't have any convictions, and don't believe in themselves-they wind up hating teaching or burning out and going on cruise control for the rest of their professional lives.

For Sheila, as it has been for Angela and Kurt, purpose created the continuous flow of mental and physical energy required for teaching—especially effective teaching. Without it, every problem becomes a crisis and every opportunity a burden. The glass is always half empty and the swing of the pendulum goes unnoticed. These are missed opportunities that could make work and play in your classroom indistinguishable.

Sheila has continued to grow and become more reflective throughout our visits. At this stage in her career, we find her not just living the philosophy she espoused in earlier visits, but actually teaching it to others. Establishing a philosophy of teaching is one of the most important steps toward becoming an effective teacher. While no one philosophy may be better than any other, developing a coherent view of teaching for yourself requires the highest level of professional commitment and maturity. No doubt Sheila will continue to grow and to add to her philosophy as she has done for most of her adult life. Her convictions and the experiences to support them will grow stronger, and with them, each new problem will be another opportunity like the hundreds that have gone before.
CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Rebirth

In this day of technological marvels and intellectual prowess, it is easy to lose track of a world that went before us, one that did not live so much by technology and the mind. The modern age has given us everything from Teflon frying pans to television—and, of course, the microcomputer. Few of us would trade these accomplishments for the world in which the inhabitants of our planet lived some 2,000 years ago.

When we think of past accomplishments such as the pyramids of Egypt, recently discovered terra cotta warriors of China, or the great Maya and Aztec city-states of central America, we begin to appreciate that not all was so primitive in those times. What is even more awe-inspiring than some of the physical accomplishments of those times is that those cultures had only an inkling of the technology that today guides and makes our daily lives supposedly "civilized." This is not a call to return to some supposed glory of an earlier times, but to pause and to think for a moment how or even if life could be meaningful without the so-called civilized world in which we live today.

The picture that is emerging from these earlier times is that they had certain elements of greatness (e.g., the Egyptian pyramids and highly refined political systems, and the Maya's accurate astronomical formulations), even by today's standards. How did these great accomplishments of the past happen? Some of them cannot be duplicated today.

In my opinion, these cultures, instead of achieving great intellect, simply "slipped out of" their intellect. In other words, they (or some among them) cast aside the accepted truths of the time to acquire a new mindset that did not assume what up to that time was taken for granted. Some would say they slipped out of one mindset or pattern of thinking and into another. How did this happen?

Since knowledge does not materialize at will, one likely explanation is that new dimensions and vistas of thought were made possible not by some mysterious emergence of intellect, but by the awakening of a new state of consciousness. In other words, new dimensions and vistas of thought may
have been created by a new awareness of previously untapped resources from the world within. These cultures, or at least some members among them, dredged up from within themselves a type of knowledge the conscious mind could not have provided. With it came a new way of thinking that promoted feats that today are the envy of many of the scientists who study them.

What do these accomplishments of the past have to do with the contents of this book? They are strangely similar to the feats I have been suggesting that you can perform in your own classroom. There are several themes that tie together the great pyramids of Egypt and the accomplishments you can create in your classroom. Neither, in my opinion, can be or were made possible by the accumulation of more knowledge, although to be sure they required the available knowledge of the day. These feats were created by a turning inward-not outward. They were created by many of the same impulses Mark followed in his quest for a new experience one morning before school. Just as Mark's climb to the top of the monkey-bars could not be accounted for by any newly learned climbing technique, I do not believe that some accomplishments of ages past can be accounted for by acquired knowledge alone.

Although perhaps not shared by everyone at the time, some early cultures discovered resources within that enabled them to dissolve existing categories of thought. At the heart of this process must have been a search for meaning and belief sufficiently strong to carry out their convictions in the most inhospitable of circumstances. They did not invent a new source of energy, create a radically new machine, or consult a textbook; they discovered all they needed within themselves. How did they do this? They did it, just as Mark's subconscious memory must have helped him to discover how to achieve the personal meaning and satisfaction he was seeking that morning before the first day of school—by being vulnerable, concentrating, sensing the flow of activity within himself, and letting his feelings and the images they provided guide his judgment.

A sense of purpose and a search for meaning surely must have accompanied the feats of some early civilizations, just as they accompanied Mark's conquest on the playground. Most important to each was a willingness to be playful—to be vulnerable—to narrow the attention, quiet the mind from distracting self-judgments, and finally, to erase the difference between thought and feeling. Both entered a period of growth wherein existing categories were replaced by the abundance of variety that lay beneath, which then was used to build new and different responses. They used the variety that lay all around them to create new thoughts and feelings that their disordered environment made possible.

Both order and disorder are necessary parts of life, and our present-day concept of change is nothing more than moving from one state to another and eventually back again. The Chinese called it yang and yin to reflect the
sunny side and dark side of a river. Their point, was not that one side had more value than the other, but that both are necessary for existence and a safe passage, just as are order and disorder. In other words, yang and yin, order and disorder, do not represent good and evil. They simply represent where we place our energy at any given time, the growth we all seek is simply traversing from the sunny side to the dark side and back again as needed, without thinking of either side as a more or less desirable state. We may perceive one side or the other as a place we wish not to be at any given point of time, so we cross to the other side, but these are not evaluative states of seeking and shunning. Just as dark makes possible the light and light the dark, order can come only out of disorder, and disorder makes order-and change-possible.

What this perspective says is that it may now be time for a change, to cross from yin to yang or the reverse, depending on your perspective. In other words, it is less important whether you see today's school environment as ordered or disordered than it is to see that the time for growth-change may be upon us. Indeed, some would see today's school environment very ordered-and within their limited perspective they would be right. Others would see today's school environment as very disordered-and within their limited perspective they would be right. In either case, the time may have come to dissolve the perspective we have held and to seek change and renewal-as Mark did when he decided to climb to the top of the monkeybars. That which made the journey possible-crossing from yin to yang or from disorder to order-was discovering a purpose greater than himself and having a belief in himself strong enough to fulfill the purpose. Mark knew this well, as did many adventurers who preceded him. For these adventurers, body and mind were one, and it was their purpose and belief that fueled their ability to surpass themselves.

I once had an experience that brought many of these thoughts home to me in a personal way. The experience was both scary, in that I heard somethings that made me uncomfortable, and exciting, in that I learned of the powerful effects of having purpose and belief. New revelations often grow out of hardship, burden, or sometimes catastrophe.

Some years ago I had the opportunity to hear Stephen Hawking, who is Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge University in England. You may have heard of him through his popular book, A Brief History of Time (1988). My visit with Professor Hawking occurred ten years prior to the publication of his book, when he was attempting to explain some of its subject to a naive and unsophisticated layman like me. It was a damp night at a remote location in Europe when he happened to find in me and some others just the sort of unsophisticated audience he needed to see if his complex notions of the universe could be understood by those unschooled in the world of physics.

I have to tell you something about Stephen Hawking-and this, for me,
was the scary part. Professor Hawking suffers from a myotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, a debilitating illness that attacks the muscular system. For this reason, the Professor is committed to live out his life in a wheelchair, must speak with the aid of a voice synthesizer, and cannot hold a pencil or pen to do his writing and research. It is commonly known among his colleagues and friends that it takes his wife over an hour each evening just to get him into bed. In spite of this illness, which Professor Hawking has had during much of his adult life, he holds one of the most prestigious academic chairs in all of Europe—the same held by Sir Isaac Newton—and is regarded worldwide as one of the most important thinkers of our time.

During my time with Professor Hawking, I couldn't help being taken aback by his physical condition and the enormous effort it took him simply to exist—to speak, hold his body in a steady position, and at times illustrate a point with a drawing apparatus designed especially for him. My thoughts at being present at all this were, quite frankly, that if I were he, I would have given up on life long ago—stayed home, kept out of sight, and died in my bed with nobody watching. Instead, here was a man resolute to forge ahead, knowing he would die an untimely death and would never be like any healthy human being—nor as well off as many sick ones. What makes him love life—even the ugly one he was experiencing? -I kept asking myself while trying to follow his explanation of how the world began billions of years ago.

The answer to my question was that Professor Hawking had found a purpose and a meaning in life that many others in that room had not. Although I do not know what Professor Hawking's personal purpose for existing was, it had to include a desire to do what no one had been able to do before him—and that was to make the history of time both brief and understandable to those of us who could use this understanding to put our own lives into perspective—and maybe place some of its contents in a book like this. Professor Hawking was testimony to the power of purpose—values that express who you are and what you stand for. Through hardships we often find ways to persevere even when the outcome is uncertain, as it must have been for Professor Hawking. Enduring hardships those in our classrooms as well as our personal lives builds the stamina we need to face disorder in our lives. Those who struggle through will emerge with a clearer view of themselves and what is important in their lives.

I would hardly recommend looking for a painful condition for the sake of finding a purpose. I suspect that Professor Hawking found his purpose long before he was stricken with an incurable disease, but I am almost certain the disease brought a resolve and an element of growth to his life that expanded his purpose and made it more understandable to him and to others. There is a certain similarity here to the burden and the often painful
conditions that come from the job of teaching. The similarity is that, as unpleasant as the situation may sometimes be, it represents, by virtue of its challenges, one of the greatest growth experiences anyone in any profession can face. The importance of this fact lies in the simple observation that, unlike many other professions, if you don't grow as a teacher, you don't survive. We need only consult the statistics in Chapter 2 to remind us of that fact. You may exist for a time by turning up your numbness amplifier to blot out the disorder in the environment around you, but before long the lack of growth—and the purpose and personal meaning it conveys—catches up to take a mental and physical toll on the teacher who is committed to convention and tradition at all costs.

In teaching, as in other roles in life, to stand still is to move backward. The reason for this is the variety from the stimulus field that itself is constantly changing. If you are not responding to the variety inherent in rapid cycles of value change, you can only shut it out at the expense of any form of change or growth. The phrase comes to mind, "If you can't lick 'em, join 'em." It's not a bad representation of the idea of meeting variety from the stimulus field with some variety of your own. Variety of your own is needed now more than ever to balance the variety inherent in the stimulus field.

From where does your variety of responding come and from where do you attain the creative yet appropriate patterns of responding required in today's classrooms? Not from others, your school administrators, or textbooks—which may indeed be useful to you in implementing your own ideas for change—but from your own potentialities, driven by a purpose and a belief in yourself. Allowing yourself to be vulnerable, concentrating on your personal purpose, sensing the flow of activity within yourself, and letting your feelings and the images they provide guide your judgment are some of the ways growth can be achieved to provide meaning and fulfillment for you in your classroom.

These characteristics release life potentialities that we never previously managed to bring to realization in our adult lives. They are those other portions of ourselves that never die and are there waiting to be called into action. If only a portion of that lost totality could be dredged up, we would experience a marvelous expansion of our powers—a vivid renewal of life. It would take us on the same kind of journey without end that Mark was experiencing for the first time. Mark was digging deep to feel himself and, finding his feelings, he was taken out of his worldly limits to surpass his own expectations.

As we all know and are so often reminded, the counterpart to birth is death. The problem with our everyday notions of these two concepts is that they convey the impression that for each of us there is only one birth and one death. Several early cultures took exception to this interpretation. We are capable of many births—our natural one and many others that tap
the life potentialities that lie dormant within us. Some of us are good at tapping
them, sometimes at just the moment we need them. Most of us are not. Without
tapping these life potentialities, many of us may be dying more than we are
living. Tapping them is the journey by which we learn to grow and discover
meaning and fulfillment. It is a journey toward an end that we cannot know,
and the end reached would be a sort of death on earth -a stagnant existence
without further possibility for change and its attendant meaning and
fulfillment. There can be no end states in which we seek refuge-only a purpose
and the search for meaning can bring us the fulfillment we seek. Mark
instinctively knew this.

What do we need to be reborn as teachers? We need a state of con-
sciousness that allows us to be playful and concentrate on the stimulus field, lets
our actions flow without the judgmental observation of Self 1, and awakens us
to the feeling images our affect provides. All of this must occur in the context of
a personal statement of purpose that can express who you are. It must be
accompanied by a belief in yourself sufficiently strong to embark on a journey
without end. These are the ingredients from which growth and the process of
rebirth springs. It can only come from our own victories within ourselves-and
only if we have the desire to test ourselves. Don't lose your nerve. Go through
with it and play your own game.

Now I come to another side of Professor Hawking's discussion that night.
In trying to convey to us a history of time, he revealed some astonishing facts
about the universe in which we live. I use the word "facts" responsibly, since
few scientists deny what Professor Hawking revealed as some of the latest
insights about how we came into existence-and even perhaps why we exist. One
of his revelations concerned the worldwide discussion going on among scientists
about recent experiments that have confirmed the presence of two powerful
forces in the universe: matter and antimatter. I could only grin with skepticism
as these two words slipped out of Professor Hawking's mouth, since they
seemed so reminiscent of the "Force" and its dark side in the movie "Star
Wars," which happened to be playing back in the States at the time. As it
turned out, there was more similarity than I could at first believe.

Although Professor Hawking took great pains to tell us that what was
labeled matter and antimatter was of little consequence (they are reversible),
the fact is that for every molecule of something we see in our universe, there is
its opposite that we do not see somewhere in our universe. In other words, there
is another side, invisible though it may be, to our existence, equal and opposite
to that which we can see and measure. One side the scientists call matter, the
other antimatter, but nothing evaluative is denoted by either word. In fact the
names could be reversed and no meaning would be lost, since they are almost
identical. This is not science fiction, but the explanation, confirmed by
measurements of the energy and mass in our solar system, for how we came
into existence and have stayed in existence for so long. This
was not always so, as there was a beginning to it all, and it will not always be so, as at some point the balance of forces will change, returning the universe to a state of oneness and undifferentiated matter.

The important implication for those of us who may be less impressed by the laws of science is that where there is goodness, which is surely part of the world we see, there is the exact opposite somewhere that we don’t see. Where there is evil, which our senses also tell us is part of the world we see, there must be the exact opposite somewhere that we don’t see. In other words, the goodness and evil we see must have opposite counterparts that we don’t see. Call them matter and antimatter, if you like, but the point is that all the goodness and all the evil that exist in the world are not before our eyes. Each has counterparts that we do not see. This is at once both a strange and an exciting proposition.

If such is the case, and many of our foremost scientists, Professor Hawking included, believe it is, the implication is great both for more evil as well as for more good to turn up around us, crossing over, so to speak, from the world of antimatter to matter. Such an exchange requires that an equal and opposite amount of matter be turned to antimatter in the process. This Professor Hawking and his colleagues know must be true in order to account for our very presence on earth. As Professor Hawking spoke, I could not stop thinking how easily good could become evil and evil turn to good in our own lives, much as it happened to Darth Vader on the cinema screen.

In a practical sense, Professor Hawking simply confirmed from a scientist's perspective that evil must be present for goodness to exist. Simply put, if each did not exist, we would not be here-nor, in the larger sense, would the universe in which we live. In fact, Professor Hawking makes a point that we cannot get rid of either one, by the nature of the physical conditions of our universe. He goes on to point out, however, that although the physical laws of existence require opposites to everything we see, in the form of antimatter, these same laws state that matter and antimatter cannot exist in exactly the same amounts. One must be slightly larger than the other, otherwise our universe would explode and vaporize in a moment, in an effect like touching positive and negative electrical wires together. Let's hope there is more positive than negative, but the physical laws are blind to good and evil: they only require more of one than the other.

What all this means for us is that order and disorder will always exist-one, to be sure, in slightly greater supply than the other, just as in the case of Professor Hawking's matter and antimatter. Also, it means that like good and evil, disorder can be exchanged for order-made to disappear, so to speak-and vice versa. Where there is disorder, there is somewhere order to be found, although it may not be visible. This is what we see before us in the world today and in our schools-continual change brought about by rapid cycles of value change, where opposites are being dredged up to replace
present-day conventions and traditions. Indeed, sometimes the replacements are positive, in our eyes, and sometimes they may be negative.

The point is that growth is the dredging-up from that invisible sector of the universe of something positive to replace something negative. Those who become conscious of their feeling images probe the antimatter that cannot be seen but can be felt, to find an equal and opposite positive force to exchange for the one that is visible but negative. Individuals who are good at accessing their feelings can exchange matter with antimatter all the time and each time make the world better. Where do they find the goodness to replace the evil? They find it exactly as Professor Hawking's laws predict—in the invisible world all around them, in which rests the opposite of everything we see in our physical world. Thus, one does not have to invent goodness. It's there for the taking for those who know how to access their feelings to find it. It must be there, Professor Hawking would say, because otherwise the evil that led you to hunt for the good could not have existed in the first place. Growth, as we have discussed it in this book and as it will be increasingly defined in the future, will not be obtaining knowledge from sources outside ourselves; it will be finding the goodness that remains hidden from our sight but that resides within us all.

Since hearing Professor Hawking's ideas, I have tried to confirm for myself the wisdom of his words—in simple, practical ways unrelated to the world of the scientist. One astonishing application of these concepts to everyday life occurred to me during a social gathering of my colleagues sometime later—and confirmed at many social gatherings of friends, relatives and colleagues since. Influenced by these thoughts, I began to notice a social phenomenon I call "life givers" and "life takers." These are two distinct types of individuals one finds in every walk of life who seem to emerge more clearly in social situations. A life giver, simply put, is someone who when speaking to you gives you back life, by acknowledging your existence, your own individuality and purpose. I don't mean that they compliment you in a cheap sense but that you can see in their eyes and their voice that for them you are someone to whom they wish to give dignity—not because of what you may have done but because you are you. They give you back your individuality and in the process bestow on you a sense of dignity that cannot be solely accounted for by the products and accomplishments with which we so often reward others. It is as though they found something unnamed within you, worthwhile and admirable, that you have not discovered. You know what your tangible accomplishments are, but they find something about you that is intangible and give it back to you as a present, so to speak, in their facial expression, eyes, and choice of words to unmistakably bestow dignity upon you, without themselves knowing or thinking about their effect on you. These are the life givers because they probe for invisible antimatter to find something positive to exchange for something negative. In other words, at least for a
moment they crowd out even your own negative thoughts and self-doubts with goodness that appears to have come from nowhere. In reality, the goodness was always there, but these life givers know how to find it.

I need not say much about life takers, because, as you sense, they are the exact opposite of life givers. These individuals take dignity from you, fail to recognize you as an individual with unique although perhaps not highly visible qualities. They say things in such a way that their real intent is to fill a void within themselves by using their interchange with you to give themselves dignity. If Professor Hawking is right about the universe, they can only add to their own dignity by taking it from another. They must, so to speak, make an exchange, leaving you their evil in exchange for your good.

It is interesting that as I move from conversation to conversation in a social gathering, I can categorize my conversation with each individual as life giving or life taking, all in the context of small talk. It is small talk that reveals the life givers and life takers the most, since there is sufficient variety to allow the conversation to move into topics more or less conducive to life giving and life taking. I must admit that some individuals don't know if they are life givers or life takers, and may be in a state of making up their minds, seeing how the world treats them, and deciding how they might fill the void within themselves.

There is one predominant characteristic that distinguishes life givers from life takers: Life givers have found a purpose and meaning to life that life takers have not. Also, they have discovered how to grow, to exchange negative for positive from the invisible world around them, and therefore they do not have to use others in the visible world to serve their own needs. They have discovered the depths of their own goodness. Life givers epitomize growth, and that is why they can give it to others at no cost to themselves—they have an endless supply of it themselves. Life takers epitomize decay, which is why they must steal from others the meaning and purpose they cannot find for themselves.

The teaching profession has plenty of good and evil, both within ourselves as teachers and in our classrooms. In fact, I would go so far as to describe the job of teaching as an "ugly generator." What I mean by this is that the stresses and strains of teaching in today's classrooms are so great that they can easily bring out what is ugly about anyone. Teaching has the capacity to take even a minor flaw possessed by millions of us and in a split second blow it up bigger than life. A quick temper, fear of failure, distrust of others, dislike for trivia, and self-doubt are more likely to manifest themselves in the classroom than in the executive boardroom, business office, sales desk, or assembly line. Why? There are many differences between these jobs and that of teaching, but the pressure to perform—to be continually onstage, to beat the clock or at least stay with it, and to deal with hundreds of unique individuals, all with different learning needs—provides some of
the reasons why. This is the dark side of the force that lies within us all, called into action by seemingly trivial events that are supplied in quantity during any class day.

Here is where we might put some of Professor Hawking's wisdom to good use. Where there is an "ugly," there is an equal and opposite positive force which could send the ugly to its death in another dimension. Try this: Write down your own personal uglies and reflect on them to envision what they might look like in your classroom. Then envision their exact opposite. In other words, conjure up a good example, a perfect model-find the antimatter. Search within yourself for a time, maybe long ago, when you would naturally have responded in a more positive, constructive manner. I predict that if you let down your self-imposed barriers to self-reflection, you will find a time and an incident when you behaved the opposite of every ugly you can identify. Once you have found this example or model in your own behavior, no matter how long ago and distant from your present context, you have exchanged matter with antimatter and in the process, evil with good.

I cannot help but reflect once again about the Indian and his magic stone I spoke of in Chapter 8. What did the stone represent? I believe it represents much of what Professor Hawking wrote about in *A Brief History of Time* and what my own observations of teachers in classrooms have confirmed many times. Both theory and practice seem to be converging to tell us something about growth that was never fully understood or appreciated. Today more than ever, we have learned that everything we can ever amount to and can be lies within us. For everything bad we see, there is some good waiting to be discovered. It is not the presence of good and evil in the world, in our personal lives, and in our classrooms that should be the center of our attention, but the exchange of good for evil. That exchange presumes that there is a place evil can be sent where it no longer can be seen and a place from where unlimited goodness can be derived to replace it. The process of making the proper exchange is growth. The context of the conversion is within ourselves.

As this book ends, it is important to note that all of our lives have endings, transitions, and new beginnings. I hope your life and especially your teaching career will have many endings, transitions, and new beginnings. There is little doubt that with each of these stages we experience discomfort. Endings are sad because we leave part of ourselves behind-like that summer vacation we liked so well but will never relive. Transitions are equally painful because we are forced to live for a time in both the past and the future, with no sense of a meaningful present. Beginnings can be the hardest of all, since it is here we must leave behind all that has become comforting and secure-never quite certain if the future will be better than the past. This latter dilemma must not be so different from the difficult decision made by people who give up home and friends to emigrate to a new country. They
must ask themselves, their friends, and their families, "Will it be any better? Can I manage the change? Do I have strength to start anew?" The feeling will not be so different from those of some of you reading this book. Will it be any better? Can I manage the change? Do I have the strength to see it through?

Those who have made dramatic changes—from East to West and in their own personal and professional lives—have not sought change for the sake of change. They have sought change to discover a purpose and a meaning to their lives that would have been impossible in their earlier context. They risked the trials and tribulations of a journey, not to find a new geographical location—a place on a map—but to find themselves. They sought the variety that allowed them to choose their own purpose and meaning and, finding it, to make the exchange between good and evil, as they saw fit. This is a journey that does not end. To end it would be to rid ourselves of the purpose and meaning that come from it. Although our destination must change from time to time, each time surpassing earlier expectations, the journey must go on to preserve the purpose and meaning it provides. The personal growth that our journey brings is our real destination and, at least for our time here on earth, it is a journey that must never end.
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