**Life Lessons from My Students**

*Who dares to teach must never cease to learn.*

~John Cotton Dana

It is a humbling experience when teachers are the ones who are also learning in their very own classroom. After high school and college, it might seem as if the days of tests and homework are over; however, when 150 students enter those classroom doors, teachers quickly realize that life tests and life homework come right along with the students.

As an educator, I have discovered that the life lessons that students bring with them to school are the ones that I truly need to learn.

I learn about commitment from my students who catch the 6:30 AM community bus because no family member will give them a ride to school.

I learn about perseverance from my student with special needs who is included in my geometry class and comes to tutoring every single morning, and Saturday, because he desperately wants to earn “proficient” on the end of course exam and succeed like his peers.

I learn about strength from my student who has lost both parents and is now watching his last living relative die of cancer, yet still manages to come to school and focus on his classes.

I learn about patience from my student who can only do her homework in morning tutoring because she has to take care of her siblings from the moment the 3:30 bell rings until 10:30 at night.

I learn about compassion from my student who wears the same clothes two days in a row because he tried to stop his mom’s boyfriend from hitting her. They decided to put him out, and he had to sleep in a car.

All of these qualities that I have learned from my students have added up to a philosophy that has shaken my world, transformed my thinking, and has urgently called me to teach every single moment for these students, because they all deserve a future, no matter their circumstances.

This ambitious task of using every single teaching moment to the fullest is not an adventure for the teacher. Instead, it is an adventure for the very life, soul, and purpose of the student.

The life tests and the life homework that continue to be piled on my desk are definitely a collection of knowledge that has the power to make an everlasting difference in the lives of so many students. Their voices want to be heard and their gifts want to be celebrated. I have learned that lessons are not always meant to be for students. As a teacher, I look forward every year to the lessons my students bring to the classroom, because I know these lives are ready to be changed.

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by *Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Amy Newmark*