

The Reasons I Love Teaching

Ruth and I went to the Ohio Light Opera last month and stayed at a local motel. While having breakfast, we observed a lady fall as she was getting up from her table. Her husband and adult son were with her and they very caring and patient as they helped her to her feet...a task that took four or five minutes.

After she was upright and starting to leave the restaurant, another customer approached her and in a cheerful voice said, "I'm glad that all worked out for you. I have had trouble falling myself...in fact, I have fallen in nice restaurants all over the world." They both laughed and talked about experiencing balance problems as they have grown older...and discussed things that helped them avoid these unwanted falls.

After the lady who had fallen departed, I walked over to the lady who had been so helpful and said, "I just wanted to tell you that that was one of the more empathic interchanges I have ever seen between two strangers and I really admire your efforts to help that lady." She thanked me and said it came naturally as she was a retired school counselor.

I said that earlier in my career I had taught school counselors at Kent State University and she said, "Are you Dr. Saltzman?" and proceeded to tell me that she had been in several of my classes in the late 1960's and early 1970's.

She said she thought of me often over the years as we had had a special event happen between us that affected her life. She said that she was a single mother of four in the early 1970's and needed a job.

She said that I, as department chair, had waived her last requirement so that she could graduate with her master's degree, apply for certification and obtain a job in Bay Village. She would not been able to get the job if she had had to complete the last requirement for her degree. She had a life-long career helping others as a school counselor and stated that she never forgot to show the compassion to others that I had shown her.

I left that interchange grateful that I had made the right decision to intervene so many years ago, as so often in my career I have seen administrators hold fast to unreasonable requirements to the disadvantage of the student. "It is in the Handbook!"

Receiving positive feedback from former students is one of the most valuable rewards a teacher/professor can ever receive. I am so happy I chose the field of education as the place I spent my career.

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