

My Dear Friend,

While you may see yourself as a teacher of the subject music, you are so much more! You are a teacher of people, that is your true specialization, not just the subject of music. Sure, when students come to you they want to learn how to play the piano, but as an imperative compliment, you can teach them how to learn, how to grow!

As a teacher, you do not have to be compassionate, nice, firm, exciting, stern, humorous, energetic, quiet, serious, entertaining, inspiring or funny. What you have to be is effective, which ultimately means you are all of the above! As an effective teacher you are a chameleon.

A master teacher is a conglomerate of professions! You are a detective, a doctor, an architect, a psychologist, a coach, and a comic!

You are a detective because you have to find out what your student's learning challenges are.

You are a doctor because you need to diagnosis how to treat those challenges.

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You are an architect because you need to design a blueprint for the success of your student.

You are a psychologist because you need to understand your student as a person.

You are a coach because all good coaches stay on the sidelines and “coach.” They do not enter the game.

You are a comic because there will be times you will need to lighten the mood.

Many of your students will have the wrong idea about learning. They will have been told, by teachers and other authority figures who are well meaning but mislead, that learning is supposed to be fun. This is simply not true!

Learning is work and for the most part, work is not fun! Mastery of what you are learning, however, is an addictive, powerful feeling for it creates the feelings of accomplishment, success and pride in the learner. Showing a student how to create these, for himself, is a gift that will change that student’s life forever!

What is that gift? It is the gift of growth, the expansion of their comfort zones. Once your students become addicted to that feeling,

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nothing will stop them from achieving their own personal greatness! It is in this greatness that not only the student grows, but on an even larger scale, the world grows as well. So you see, your role as a piano teacher is SO much more!

What if your student holds the key to solving the world's hunger problem but does not believe or take pride in his own ability to learn? Do you think he will unwrap his gift and deliver it to the world? Of course not!

What if your student is a scientist-to-be who will eradicate the world of cancer, but he does not believe in himself? Do you think he will deliver his cure to the world? Absolutely not! He will continue to harbor it deep in the depths of his own self-doubt.

You are so much more than a subject teacher; you have the opportunity to show your students how to achieve their fullest potentials...all through a "simple" piano lesson!

A most important part of your job is insuring that your students are not renting information from you, but instead, becoming "experience owners." The only way they can become owners is through work and effort. Do not rob them of this opportunity, for each time you do so you will also be robbing them of the chance to create self-esteem.

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Rest assured, on their path to success, they will stumble. This is when you need to reach into your toolbox and use the tool of compassion. To quote an overused but accurate adage, “People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care!”

Ultimately this is what it is all about; to care enough about the success of those put in your care that you are willing to do whatever it takes to create an environment in which they can thrive! You don’t just want them to grow, you want them to thrive! You want them to explode with the joy of knowing they can achieve anything they set their mind to!

Know this, few people will be as committed to your student’s success as you. Sometimes this may feel frustrating. At these times, be kind to yourself, the same compassion that is necessary for your student’s to succeed is the same compassion that will nurture the garden of your dreams.

Enjoy the journey, for it is all journey. One moment at a time, one day at a time, one student at a time.

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