

# Does she know?

Business



It's not easy being a teacher. I wouldn't know personally, but I can only assume from my perspective that it's pretty tough. You walk into a classroom filled with at least twenty different girls, all coming from different backgrounds, different kinds of families. One girl is probably anorexic, another girl probably wishes she was, and another girl could be flat out trying to kill herself. Then again, you would never know.

Because when you walk into that room and see so many faces, you're main concern is trying to differentiate between all them – forget looking deep into their minds or anything like that. Of course, there's always going to be the obvious sufferers – the ones with their heads faced down, or bruises, even cuts on their arms. They barely even try to hide it. Sometimes, their even silently begging for you to look. But you might not even realize it – maybe you're too busy with your own kids, or the lesson you need to prepare, and by the time you get to this kid your so tired you can barely keep yourself up. And sometimes, you'll even take the extra step to talk to the kid.

I mean, what kind of teacher would you be if you let her go through everything on her own? Maybe she doesn't have parents who care or who are willing to deal with her. So you take it upon yourself – you have the whole thing thought out in your head, exactly what you're going to say and how you're going to say it. You feel great about yourself, and great about the whole idea of changing somebody's life. And then... she rejects you. Just like that! She gives you the 'go to hell' speech (courtesy to MF for that line). Like, seriously?! You just spent the entire night preparing for this, for what? For her to flip a couple of rude lines at you and then walk all over your compassionate intentions? You must feel pretty stupid at that point.

Sometimes, certain teachers get over it and try again. But for the most part, they tend to back off. And that girl that you approached? She's at home. Sobbing, crying her eyes out because it was the first time anyone has ever cared enough to approach her. Can you even begin to understand what that feels like? When you grow up with nobody in your life – or when everyone abandons you – and then all the sudden years later, somebody has the audacity to just pop up into your life and tell you they care? Do you even understand how terrifying that is? She's not telling you to leave her alone. Her mouth may say it, her words may imply it, but at the end of the day that's not what she's saying.

She doesn't want you running off. She doesn't know how to handle it – and the initial reaction is just a classic defense mechanism that kids who are alone tend to develop. Yes, obviously these kids have thousands of walls. What do you expect? Every wall is something tragic in their lives – for whatever reason it is, they have to make themselves strong. In their minds, they're 'protecting' themselves from getting hurt by other people.

Because if you can't control what anybody else does, at least you can control how YOU yourself will react to it. So they put up these stupid walls. And yeah, they seem almost impossible to break. But the question is how much did you try? Did you care enough to take the time to break through them? Did you really sit down and think about how much she needed you? That you, YOU, had the power to change somebody's life. The power to make her feel like she actually deserves to be here? Fine.

Teachers aren't parents. And they don't have to be. No school puts it in their requirements that teachers must act as parents to the students. But as adult figures? That's a given. It doesn't matter what your signing up for – guaranteed that there will be at least one kid who looks up to you a role model.

No matter how sympathetic you are, no matter how much you actually care about the students, these things come with being a teacher. So yeah, I do feel bad for teachers. I mean, what are they supposed to do? They can't read our minds, they don't know what they should be doing. And most of the time they really think their doing the right thing – how on earth would they know? But the fact is they don't' even realize how much power they have over us students. Too much. And it sucks, really it does.

If I could change that, I would. You think I want to care about some stupid teacher who won't even remember my name in ten years? No. Can I help that? Clearly not. But what can a teacher do – she has her own life to worry about. So when it comes down to, regardless of how much they care in the moment, us kids... were still alone.