

Letter to students

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Let Your Own Light Shine

I am very grateful and feel privileged to have had the opportunity of helping you along your path in life. As your English language and Literature teacher, I have been privileged to be your chaperone and learner. I have been fortunate to receive much more than I have given. It has been most rewarding for me. As an educational theorist, Paulo Freire captures it; our collective educational experiences should be of " a teacher who learns and learners who teach".

As you graduate, pursue your dreams and passions relentlessly. All you have been taught is a foundation on which to build your own outlooks and ideals. World-renowned Educational theorist and Youth expert Henry Giroux bits of advice that you should " never separate theory from practice..." Be as independent and interdependent in your thinking as well as your actions and stay connected to your core beliefs.

I see in you all, the very people who will teach, guide and shape the future of this country and by extension the world. It is the most important and sacred duty. Believe me when I say this; every single one of you is a key part of the future, a future that will simply not work without you.

Your place is in helping people be their best. Remember, no one person is most knowledgeable on every issue, so be open-minded and embrace the changes in society. I implore you to be the change you seek.

When you make mistakes, do not dwell on it or on the past, except for
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lessons learned. In these times, remember to focus on the passion that drives you. Do not doubt yourselves, rather be bold and face your challenges.

Never be afraid to question any issue(s) that thaws at your conscience. Be prepared to challenge the 'status quo' if need be, for it is much better to stand alone on the 'right' side than to conform against your good conscience. If you have a viewpoint, an idea or when a simple thought crosses your mind, speak up and share it. Do not resist any positive change or be adverse to criticism, take it all in your stride. Treat everyone who holds or proposes differing opinions to yours with the respect you would want for yourself.

Always remember, it is not the responsibility of others to change or make things better, it is yours too. As Musician Graham Nash points out, "[You too] can change the world".

Finally, good luck as you find your own selves and fulfill your dreams. Let your light so shine!

Congratulations and Shalom!