

# Challenges in the path to self-actualization

[Science](#), [Social Science](#)



## Challenges in the Path to Self-Actualization

To be gifted and learning disabled at the same time must be very difficult for the affected individuals, as well as their parents and educators. “ My Thirteenth Winter” by Samantha Abeel (2003) helps readers understand what people like her go through every day as a person and as a student. I expected to be able to relate to Abeel and her personal struggles, because we all have feelings of helplessness every now and then in our lives. I can relate to her difficulties of feeling isolated, while striving to attain self-actualization; furthermore, Abeel helps me become a more sensitive and responsive teacher in the classroom.

Abeel is a gifted student, but because of her learning disability, she is filled with panic and anxiety; but through her determination and social support, she deals with her feelings of isolation. I find it very meaningful that despite being diagnosed with dyscalculia, Abeel manages to find inspiration through her creative talent and the support of her school and teachers. Writing provides her an outlet for her genius and anxieties. I am impressed that she does not let her disability become her personality. I can relate to her feelings of social detachment. Before, I used to be very shy, but because of my family’s support and after finding good friends, I learned to enhance my social skills. Like Abeel, it is important to not be stunted by life’s challenges. Instead, people should manage to use them as learning experiences and sources of strength.

Abeel helps me become a better teacher in the classroom by encouraging me to improve my skills and knowledge, so that I can support students like her. As a future teacher, I want to help both gifted and learning disabled

students to attain their self-actualization. The meaning of self-actualization depends on their dreams and goals in life. Abeel's story sensitizes me to the unique difficulties of her learning condition. As a teacher, I should be able to encourage her, so that she will not lose hope in herself. I must also be prepared in handling cases like her, which I will soon encounter as a teacher.

Abeel inspires people with learning disabilities like her, as well as people without these problems. As a person, I can relate to her desire of attaining her highest potential, however challenging it might be. As a teacher, she inspires me to be prepared in responding to students with special needs like her. Abeel reminds the audience that every dream can come true, as long as they tell themselves that they can and will achieve them.

## Reference

Abeel, S. (2003). *My thirteenth winter: A memoir*. New York : Orchard Books.

Watch “ Motivational Breakthrough 1-9” by Richard Lavoie on YouTube.

Motivational Breakthrough Discussion Forum. (10 points)

Question: What struck you as a ‘ career changing’ philosophy while you watched these video segments?

What struck me as a career changing philosophy is that rewards will not work if they are not aligned to children’s underlying motivations, and that these motivations can differ for every student. I have always believed in rewards as an effective way of changing behavior. Lavoie made me realize the truth that it is a lazy and ineffective way, if it is only material and is not related at all to a child’s motivational sources. Rewarding children with material, especially monetary, rewards are not good for them in the long run. Teachers should find out what truly motivates children, so that they can engage them in their classes and help them reach their fullest potential.

Question: How do you anticipate your teaching practices changing after viewing?

I learned that I will use teaching and communication styles that respond to my students’ motivations, and I will never use disappointment and punishment techniques to change their behaviors. I will ask each of my students what motivates them, by asking about the things they do that make them happy. This way, I can add these motivations to my teaching strategies. I have never believed in the efficacy of punishment. I appreciate that I learned the power of sharing power with students. Using power-sharing strategies like minor choice or getting a commitment technique can help me deal with power-hungry students.

Question: Add any other thoughts you had after watching.

The myths and misconceptions about motivation have been very enlightening for me. They made me realize that no one is unmotivated or inherently lazy. Many children suffer only from “learned helplessness,” and I can use different strategies to help them tug that chain of helplessness. I also learned that I can use Maslow’s hierarchy of needs to ensure that the motivation problems of my students are not merely physical. I will make sure they have time to eat, drink, rest, have some air, and eliminate wastes, so that these simple matters will not derail their motivation. I also want to learn more about my students’ secondary needs, so that I can help them find their motivation in class and in life. Lavoie shared some important techniques that can be applied to students with different learning needs and levels. Essentially, they are techniques that are student-centered and focus on their motivation, because motivation is an effective driver of human behavior.