

## On Teaching and Training. Two Key Elements Great Teachers Share.

*“...Think back a moment, who was your favorite teacher?”*

By Amy McKenzie

1843 words | 7 pages

---

### What does it take to be an outstanding teacher or trainer?



Most teachers with a solid knowledge about their topic can bring their expertise to a classroom and successfully disseminate the information. That begs the question, is that all there is; moving information from one brain to another?

Certainly gaining knowledge is immensely important, but what makes it stick?

Think back a moment, who was your favorite teacher? Put yourself there in the classroom, see the windows, the blackboard, the books... What do you notice about yourself? Are you doodling, daydreaming perhaps? Or are you on the edge of your seat, listening intently, taking copious notes? If so, why? What makes this class different from all the others? After all, there's still a hefty textbook to wade through, tests to pass and a final exam on the horizon. What's different?

When I look back, the class that stands out is one I had no interest in and, truth be told, the one I was dreading. Dissect a frog? Really?!? For an animal-loving pacifist who hates the sight of blood, this was the ultimate injustice, a mandatory sentence! Biology and me were clearly not going to see eye to eye as I was far more interested in matters of the heart than the mechanics of how it worked. Yet, Ms. Feingold, had me hooked in

the first hour and it wasn't the information she had to share. It was her, and I don't mean her personality, at fourteen years old the quality of a teacher's character was not at the forefront of my mind. No, there was something I couldn't quite put my finger on, a certain something I'd never experienced with a teacher before.

## **She drew me in and I was riveted.**

In hindsight, it's clear my fascination was, in part, my desire to discover what made her tick. What could cause someone to be completely engaged while teaching a room full of lethargic teenagers? I had to break the code.

I was on a hunt to uncover the greatest secret of the human psyche... how to love your life. I gave my best at every turn, willingly committed to stomaching my nausea in exchange for this wisdom. I positively yearned to be illuminated. How was it possible? She made me love the very thing I dreaded. And it was effortless on her part. There was no fanfare, no cajoling, no coercing, nor did she wait for us to get on board, it was all we could do to keep up with her!

## **And then one day it struck me - - her secret was pure, unmitigated passion.**

### **Key Element # 1 = Passion**

And what exactly *is* passion? The Urban Dictionary tells us, "Passion is ambition materialized into action." I can appreciate this definition, however, it occurs to me as incomplete. What comes before ambition? In other words, what fuels the passion?

I would venture to say it is inspiration, which literally means to "breathe life into" something. Inspiration certainly must come *before* ambition or action. And when we look at what inspires us, I find a feeling of love, for someone or something, is generally present.

## **Ms. Feingold is a testament to this precept as she clearly loved her work... passionately.**

If we are looking to see if we measure up as exceptional teachers, it might be prudent to ask ourselves this rather simple question,

**“Do I love my work so completely that it inspires action?”**

If the answer is yes, score one for the home team, you are indeed passionate about your work.

Yet is passion enough? I believe it goes hand in hand with the second key element most certainly evident in remarkable teachers; that of integrity.

### **Key Element # 2 = Integrity**

The word integrity evolves from the Latin adjective *integer*, meaning whole or complete. Now most definitions of integrity focus on one's moral compass, including reliability and consistency, all relevant to this conversation. These are attributes we certainly strive for as teachers and look for as employers, however, in this context I hold integrity's meaning to include an "inner sense of wholeness."

To clarify, when I later use the phrase "out of integrity", I am not suggesting someone is morally bankrupt if they do not have an "inner sense of wholeness" as relates to their work. There are many wonderful, ethically sound people who are no longer passionate about their work and in some cases, never were. In this context, to be clear, I am focusing on an aspect of integrity as a place to look from, a measuring stick if you will, to check if we have areas where we are lacking when it comes to having a sense of our own wholeness.

To put it plainly, from this view, it could be said we are “out of integrity” when we are unsettled or unresolved about something, specifically when we are not taking the necessary actions to resolve the issue so that it becomes whole and complete. Said another way, any area we proclaim to be true for ourselves, if in reality, it is not, may be considered a pretense, and thus reflect a lack of inner wholeness or integrity.

For example, saying, “I love teaching,” if in fact, I do not, could be viewed in this context as being “out of integrity”.

And I notice, integrity viewed in this light is a two-part phenomenon; one being our outer reality, the other our inner state of wholeness. In order to be truly effective as teachers, it is imperative that both aspects of our integrity, inner and outer, be whole and complete.

For example, I notice when I am unprepared or unresolved in any area, my teaching tends to fall flat and creates minimal retention. My preparation must be whole and complete to land effectively (outer reality) and I must be fully engaged and at home with my subject matter (inner wholeness) to relay information successfully.

## **As a teacher and coach, I find managing the two aspects of my integrity, inner and/or outer, can improve my performance.**

**I do so by asking myself questions when preparing a lecture of seminar such as the following:**

Am I personally taking the actions I am teaching? (Outer)

If not, am I being transparent, sharing the gaps in my productivity to show what it looks like when work is incomplete? (Inner)

Am I more concerned about furthering the understanding of my students, or invested in projecting an image of someone who “knows”? (Outer)

Am I willing to give up any and all pretenses? (Inner)

You may wish to create your own questions, based on areas you identify, areas you feel you may be lacking in either passion or integrity. Making a game plan to address each item, taking on one at a time, helps to keep that big ol’ elephant - our process of personal development - bite-sized.

**For if we aspire to be exceptional teachers/coaches/trainers, we must have an endgame in mind. George Bernard Shaw, one of my all-time favorite authors, is often quoted on the subject of teaching, “Those who can do, those who can't teach.”**

This is often true, however, much as I revere Shaw, I refuse to accept that without a fight. I believe it is possible to do *and* teach. And excel at both!

If that is true, what will it take? Brazen honesty for one.

Answering the hard questions for another:

**Do I love what I am teaching with a genuine passion?**

Am I transparent, whole and complete? Am I taking consistent action?

If you know yourself to be passionate, whole and complete already with your teaching and training, congratulate yourself; the personal development required to achieve that level of accomplishment is considerable!

If teaching is something you are truly passionate about but you are having difficulty-managing aspects of your integrity, it may be time for some personal development. Or it could be as simple as taking the actions you are encouraging others to take and haven't yet yourself. Perhaps some continuing education is in order. Maybe finding the right coach to help you be accountable. It might be as simple as putting an action plan on paper and then inputting it into your calendar. We tend to focus all of our energy on our students, or as parents of our children, and forget to breathe into the oxygen mask first ourselves. Give yourself the gift of personal focus.

It may be the other way around, you have plenty of integrity, your work is complete, you are prepared, consistent and reliable but your students are lackluster. People are

walking out of your trainings with great information but they don't appear inspired. If this resonates, it may be an indicator that some aspect of your passion is out of sorts, or missing altogether.

## **In my experience, the very best teachers love their subject beyond reason.**

It is that pure passion, which completes absorption, that willingness to be whole and complete in every action they take that translates to their students as sheer wonder. If that is not the case, if your students are not inspired when they leave your class or seminar, webinar or whatever it may be, then perhaps it is time to shake things up. To shine a light upon the lack of authenticity that is robbing you of your joy.

We humans have a tendency towards resignation. We blindly accept the idea that this is how life is and cease to look at what might be possible. The truth is, however it is now is not etched in stone and is *not* how life has to be. We always have a choice.

So what is the solution if one finds they are no longer burning with a deep passion? It's simple. Ask your heart, it already knows the answer perhaps you just haven't been listening.

Now is your opportunity to grade yourself on these two key elements. Take inventory so to speak and commit to replacing what is missing. Take action.

For, in the end, we cannot give what we ourselves do not possess. To be great teachers, we must develop many attributes, passion, and integrity being tantamount on the list. And as we expand our capacity to be present, passionate, and actively engaged, we inherently increase our ability to serve those who would learn from us.

## **I ask you, what greater gift is there than to 'breathe life' into another that leaves them with an experience of being passionate, whole and complete?**



---

*Amy McKenzie~*

The Network Marketing Magazine is proud to introduce Amy McKenzie. She is a Producer / Director / Writer / Keynote Speaker / Entrepreneur /Artist Coach and Lifelong Student.

Amy is also a Contributing Author for us and now represents our 27%’er Success Program as one of our Lifetime members and Dynamic Leader.