

ODE TO A TEACHER

A teacher is one who learns. A teacher is one who leads us to a distant star and then joins us in the marvel of looking at the star in the first time sense of wonder, expectancy, and mystery. A teacher is one that recognizes that we teach one another and that there is a learning that transcends traditional roles of teacher-student, without which the mystery of life cannot be entered into.

A teacher is one who listens. To hear and be sensitive to the sounds of silence means to tune into life itself --its questions, concerns, thoughts, feelings, comparisons, fears, anxieties, joys, securities or lack of them, and pneuma, (the Spirit who gives life). The teacher who listens plows the ground for future crops.

A teacher is one who loves. To help another achieve new senses of identity, purpose and meaning is one aspect of love. To forgive, to console, to touch, to heal, and to embrace those persons who feel unlovable is another. Teaching is running the race that is set before us; stopping for those who have fallen; and never starting for those who cannot run.

A teacher is one who laments. The lamenting teacher shows feelings and concerns about brokenness in the world and is not only willing to teach what he or she has read but also (most importantly) to teach what he or she has lived. Being open to cry over the hurts of others gives passion to the class, without which learning remains only superficial.

A teacher is one who longs. To wish, to hope, to dream, and to plan for new depths of existence heretofore unknown frees the teacher from giving yesterday's answers only to today's questions and instills in us a taste for the peace which passeth all understanding. A teacher who longs has great potential for change and growth.

A teacher is one who lengthens. The teacher who stretches our imaginations, lengthens our reach for one another and for knowledge, and expands our possibilities of life is precious indeed. The teacher who lengthens ties into the mysteries of eternity itself and the eternal purpose of God.

A teacher is one who leads. The teacher who leads not only into already charted waters but also runs the risk of leading into uncharted waters as well is invaluable. To lead without going too fast or too slow, to lead without being oppressive, and to lead with willingness to follow portray one who is as concerned with the means as with ends. And alas we find our ends in our means.

A teacher is one who laughs. To laugh at life, at self is to express a joy which, though essential for life, the world is losing. To laugh is to comprehend and express the mysteries of life in a way that has no substitute. Laughing is the cry of the free – the forgiven – the redeemed. To laugh is then to acknowledge the incomparable gifts of God.

Bud Holland