



## "Today is September 5th, Teacher's Day.

Let me wish all of you a happy Teacher's Day. I am always fond of saying that. Teaching is my first wife. Research is my sweetheart. And administration is my passion. Teaching is the noblest profession. And it is also the mother of all professions. A teacher should love three things. He or she should love his or her profession. Next, the subjects of teaching and like the students. A teacher is, in fact, the game-changer. A teacher can make things happen. A teacher is truly a transformational leader. In our Indian culture and ethos, a teacher occupies the third position after the mother and the father.

See, there are three kinds of students or learners: slow learners, average learners, and advanced learners. A teacher must be able to focus on the average learners to the maximum possible extent and also the slow learners so that the advanced learners will take care of themselves. The teacher must be able to create, build, nurture, and sustain a kind of conditioned, congenial, and continual learning atmosphere both inside the classroom and also outside the classroom. As a matter of fact, real learning will always take place outside the four walls. So, in this way, the focus must be not on what to learn but how to learn. The process of learning makes all the difference. There is a saying: educational institutions are not petrol bunks to pump knowledge from the textbook into the brain of a student. Students should have the motivation to learn and grow. Teachers are merely the stimulators of learning. Teachers can take the horse to the pond, but he or she cannot make it drink by dipping its mouth.

Today, what we require is a kind of questioning mindset on the part of the learner. We must be able to question unquestionable things. That is possible only when the learning atmosphere is imaginative, creative, and innovative. A real teacher is not simply focusing on the syllabus or the textbooks. My dictum is always to look beyond the curriculum. A teacher should always move beyond the curriculum so that it will stimulate, inspire, and provoke the learner to look beyond the curriculum. So, as a matter of fact, if you want to teach mathematics to Mr. Peter, you must know not only mathematics but also Mr. Peter. That is nothing but the human side of learning, the psychology of the learner's mindset.

In this world, there is no retirement for a teacher because a teacher will always be a lifelong learner and totally passionate and committed to the philosophy of transforming the hearts and minds of the learners. And today, Teacher's Day, a teacher need not be a formal teacher. And I understand even a farmer who is totally uneducated but wiser than an educated person can transform our lives. He can be a Pathfinder. Therefore, an informal teacher is one who shows the way and tells us what to do and what not to do. It means he or she will be a guiding spirit, and that is nothing but the inherent quality of a teacher.

Then I want to make certain confessions of a teacher because I got four decades of teaching experience. And if a student has not been unjust to the subject, then I feel that the teacher has not taught the subject. A teacher should not just teach the subject; he or she should teach how to learn the subject. And ultimately, the main object and purpose of education are the manifestation of perfection, which is already there in a person. To manifest such things, we must be able to connect the plug so that electricity will flow. So it means the ultimate aim is to unlock and unleash the potential within every learner or student.

And today, it is not enough if we know how to answer the questions. The time has come to question the answers. There is a paradigm shift. Say no to memory-based rote learning today. A learner must develop what you call critical and higher-order thinking skills so that he or she will stand out in the crowd. He or she can contribute something meaningful so that he or she can bring meaningful difference in the lives of others. Ultimately, a teacher will envision, empower, enable, energize, enthuse, educate, enlighten, engage, and excel in whatever he or she does.

The biggest challenge today, both inside the classroom and outside the classroom, is how to handle students' disengagement, cynicism, and skepticism. Because unless the learning experience is meaningful and interesting, students will not engage themselves in the entire process of learning. So, all the efforts will be drowned in water.

A teacher will not be able to reach the intended goals, and he or she cannot create the intended impact in the hearts and minds of the learners. Therefore, the pedagogical innovations will tell us today, thanks to Covid-19 and post Covid-19 situation. That is Formula One Third classroom learning that is called one-third C learning. Then one-third E learning or online learning, then the remaining one-third is very critical and crucial. That is one-third experiential learning by providing hands-on experience to the learners.

I am reminded of David Kolb's learning cycle. During the 1970s, David Kolb advocated experiential learning cycle, which is a virtuous learning cycle. He talks about what we call any experience must be concretized. That is called concrete experience. Whether it is formal or informal, serious or laborious, purposeful or not, by default, or by design, or even by accident? No problem. Any experience should be concretized. When you concretize the experience, that experience will become learning-full. That is the first stage called concrete experience.

That concrete experience must give room for the next stage in the cycle. That is reflective observation. We should look back and think loudly: What is there in my experience? That is called lived-in experience because I am undergoing that experience personally, willfully, and I will be able to sense a lot of things because there are several moments of truth in that.

That reflective observation is the second stage. The third stage is nothing but abstract conceptualization. Because I must be able to conceptualize my learning experience so that I can share it with others. And ultimately, I'll be able to transform the hearts and minds of the other learners. It becomes contagious. Learning should become contagious. So that is the third stage called abstract conceptualization. Because it is not a complete zero,

it can be viewed as a O or it may be a love design or it could be a heart. Or it could be a mango. It could be symbolic. It means abstract thinking will add meaning to whatever we perceive in the entire process. That is called abstract conceptualization. Next stage comes according to David Kolb is active experimentation. Because we should not become what we call a stagnated person. Every moment is a learning moment.

Every moment is a questioning moment. Every moment is a kind of new experience for us. Only when I play out my mind. That's important. That is called when we toil with a new idea, a new concept, a new formula, a new set of hypothesis, or an application.

Then, according to David Kolb, the cycle will continue. The wheel will move in a meaningful way, and we'll be able to add a lot of meaning to our experience. That is what we call transforming experience into a lifelong learning process. Therefore, David Kolb's learning cycle is a lifelong learning process that is very important.

And I'm also reminded of John Dewey, the greatest philosopher of education. He talks about teaching should not be telling. Teaching should be asking. You must be able to ask a lot of questions. But the teacher is not the fountain of all the knowledge. The teacher should be able to provoke thinking on the part of the learner so that the learner will be able to come out with their answers. And that is called the questioning mindset on the part of the learner.

Then the most important thing is a teacher is the third parent. A teacher should not say, "Don't do this. Don't do that." He should not say, "Do this. Do that." What he should say is, "Let's do this." He should become a partner in learning. It is nothing but a collaborative learning process.

So I am reminded of what Robert Frost says. "I am here not to tell you what to think but how to think." So the how of thinking is more important. That is a kind of learning atmosphere we should be able to build and sustain today. That is called the how of thinking.

Then, let me wind up my message by saying this. All great teachers are great influencers. And all great influencers are great leaders. And all great leaders are great followers. So it means a teacher is a leader, a follower, and an influencer. Ultimately, the teacher will make you work hard, but he will also tell you how to work hard, when to work hard, where to work hard, and why to work hard. Because without hard work, nothing is possible. Everything is possible when you work hard. If I want to be a champion, I must be a hard worker. A teacher is a hard taskmaster, but he is also a compassionate friend. He will provoke us, and he will guide us. Ultimately, the teacher will add a lot of value to our life. So I thank all my teachers on this great day, and I also wish all my colleagues and all my friends, teachers of the world, a very happy and prosperous Teacher's Day.

Thank you very much."