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**The Heart of
Teaching: A
Professor's
Pedagogical
Reflections on
Courage to Teach 20
Years Later**

The Challenge

Twenty years ago Parker Palmer published “*Courage to Teach*”, an innovative exploration and articulation of the inner life of teachers. The central question of the book is “who is the self that teaches?” leading to the assertion that teachers teach who they are. Over the past twenty years I have attempted to teach in ways that are attentive to my calling to teach and serve the learning interest of my students. Through this interactive session I will share some of my learnings, informed by “*Courage to Teach*”, about how to teach with greater levels of “authenticity and integrity”.

The Approach

As an educator I take a self-reflective pragmatist approach to teaching. The three tools I use for making sense of ways to improve my teaching include: self, text, and learners. Each moment in the classroom offers opportunities to discover teaching gifts and misperceptions of my core values as an educator. *Courage to Teach* provides an array of access points including: subject-centered curriculum, collaboration, courage, teaching from a place of authenticity and integrity, wholeness, and vulnerability.

How it Went

It has taken me twenty-years of success and mistakes but I'm finally feeling like I have a sense, thanks to the guidance of *Courage to Teach*, of what it means to be an educator. The root meaning behind the word educator is to draw-out. I learned that teaching is as much about drawing out the inner knowing of students relative to an academic discipline as it is about drawing out my personal inner-wisdom of how to teach.

Advice for Others

It is never too late to start exploring the ways that the inner life of the teacher reaches into the outer practice of the teacher. Trusting the heart of teaching is difficult and complex work but essential to effective, life-giving, forms of teaching. The craft of teaching is a combination of best and deep practices; technique and heart.



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