

The Teacher who changed my life!!

By | Jun 9, 2013

A dream begins with a teacher who believes – with a teacher who tugs and pushes and guides his or her students, prodding them at times but always supporting them, quietly, gently and steadily. A good teacher not only teaches; he or she knows and understands the students. Good teachers are the ones who if need be, remove the barriers and the road blocks from their students' paths. They are selfless and giving and are only content when their students become what they are meant to be. Lucky are those whose paths cross with such a teacher.

I had the good fortune to have come in contact with a teacher of this stature, of gaining from his considerate behaviour, when I enrolled in college for a Masters in Education.

M.Ed like any other professional course demands complete involvement especially with the practicals, assignments and dissertation. In a short period of time there is a lot to accomplish and the coursework keeps students on their toes. I joined the M.Ed programme during one of the most challenging periods of my life. My husband, our three-year-old daughter and I had recently shifted to Ludhiana, a totally new place for us. It was also for the first time that we were on our own as a family, a responsibility we still had to get used to. Our daughter was finding it hard to adjust to the nuclear family, a new place, a new environment and a busy mother and father and would often fall sick. As a mother, it was very difficult for me to see her struggling and I was on the verge of giving up attending classes and actually considered dropping out of the programme. As a student, I wanted to continue my studies and was finding the course very stimulating and exciting. In spite of my strong desire to study I knew I was fighting a losing battle as it was extremely difficult to manage on both the ends and still do justice to both. Finally, I decided to give up the course and approached the Principal, Dr. Khushwinder, to inform him of my decision.

Dr. Khushwinder, the revered Principal of BCM College of Education has been an educationist for the past 21 years and is known for his dynamic personality and his eye for perfection. He is a man with a vision. In his own words, "Rules should not be binding. Their purpose is to make life structured and simple. One should not become a slave to the rules. They can and should be moulded to serve the higher goals of education for the well-being of the students."

As I had just joined the college, this was the first time I met with him and found myself instantly put at ease with his ready smile and easy manner. He took the time to listen to me and understand where I was coming from. After a few minutes, he said that the since basic problem seemed to be that my daughter needed to be with me, if my daughter was allowed to be in college with me this problem would be solved. It was an unexpected proposal and a tough one. There was the question of college discipline, of having a small child in college for almost seven hours! I was reluctant to take it on for its practical difficulty and the pressure that it would put on others. But Khushwinder sir believed it was possible and his faith ultimately gave me the confidence to continue.

The principal as well as the staff of the college extended their unconditional support to me and my daughter. If my daughter was restless or difficult to manage in the class, the teachers never let it affect their teaching. I was never made to feel uncomfortable. When my daughter was a little older, Khushwinder sir ensured that she got admission in the BCM school which was on the same campus as our college.





Khushwinder sir was my guide and a dedicated one at that. There were times when our discussions would go on for several hours and my daughter would either play in the office or sleep peacefully on his sofa. But this was not all. Midway through my course, my husband got transferred and once again it seemed unlikely that I would be able to balance house and college work. Khushwinder sir then suggested that I stay in the college's newly built hostel with my daughter. Not having to commute to college everyday saved a lot of time.

There have been many small but significant incidents during this time that reemphasized the goodness and greatness of my teacher, Dr. Khushwinder. It was only because of his support that I stayed on in college – getting the opportunity to become the college magazine editor, participate in the youth festival, attend seminars and workshops and finally, become the gold medalist in education, Panjab University for the year 2010. The next year I also cleared UGC JRF in education and am presently pursuing research with scholarship in Panjab University, Chandigarh.

When I look back at that time I realize how close I came to giving all this up and it was only because of Khushwinder sir that I had stayed on in college. I have always found him to be empowered and well in control of himself and of the various situations one faces in the working of an institution. What is amazing is that I'm not the only student he has helped and guided in this manner. Special provisions for assessment were made for a Canadian student who was finding it difficult to adjust to the Indian curriculum. During the final exams, another M.Ed student was allowed to stay in the hostel with her new born baby. There are many other cases... of truants getting reformed, underperformers performing, of students and staff carrying in their hearts the rewarding experience of learning from and associating with Dr. Khuswinder.

When I asked him the reason for his making so many allowances for students, he simply said that the focus should be on the learning, not the system. The formal system of education should not create hurdles; it should liberate the students and give them wings to fly high in the limitless sky of knowledge and empowerment and follow their dreams. Thanks to him I have the opportunity of exploring new horizons of learning. And it is thanks to him that I now have a chance to one day pass on this legacy to my students!

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