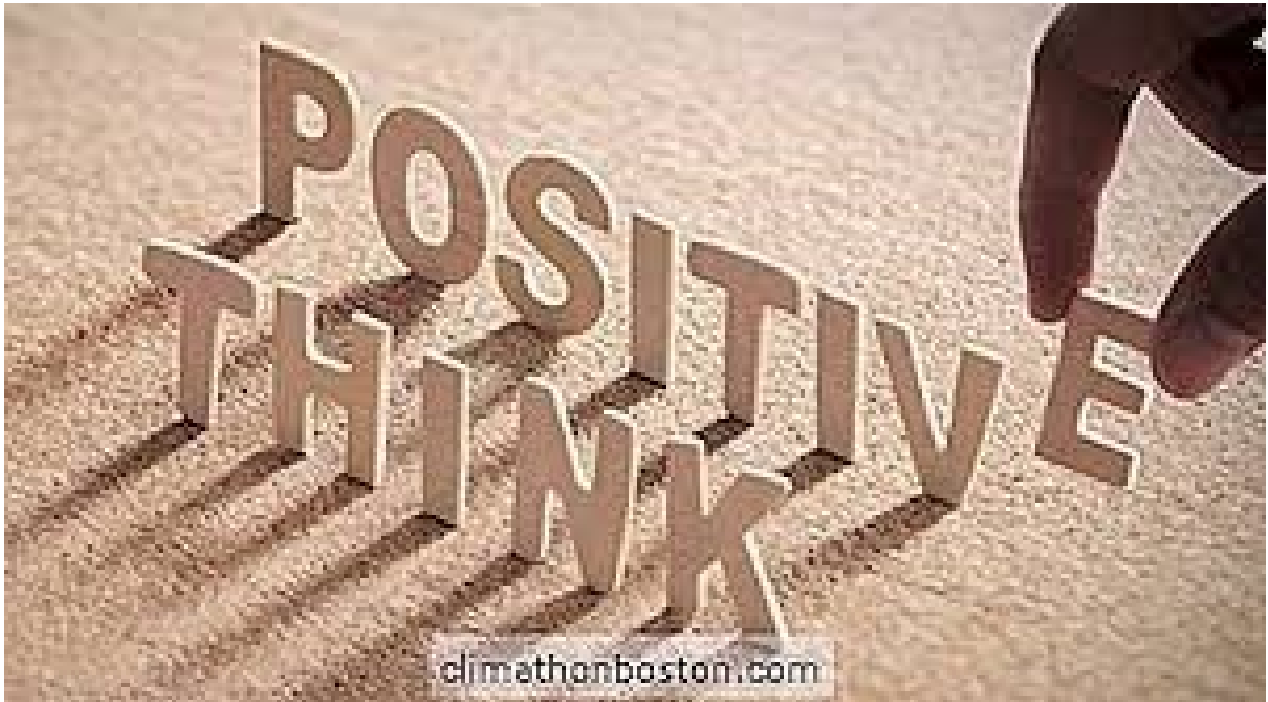


Positive thinking and the importance of feedback in teaching



Markku Kinnunen

6.Dan Thesis

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Foreword

Hi my name is Markku Kinnunen. I was born in Varkaus (1966), where I still live. I live with my wife Pirjo and with a German shepherd called Rocky. My children Sami and Anni have moved on their own from their childhood home.

I work in industry as an NDT-inspector in KiWa Inspecta. The main focus is on welding seams in the manufacture of power plants and pulp mills.

My Taekwondo journey started in 1990 by chance when I started training just to be fit with three enthusiastic young men that had started training Taekwondo. My hockey hobby was left behind, and it was time to do something again regarding physical fitness. I'm still on that journey. Taekwondo Varkaus has grown from that group of four into a club with over 100 members.

We have a long tradition of poor or at least incomplete feedback in Finland. As if the negativity resides permanently in our genes. It is good to start thinking about what we want to carry with us and what we would be willing to give up. Experience shows that we have gained a lot of good things as a spiritual heritage from the past generations, and they most certainly can be passed on for the strength of future generations. But there is a lot that does not stand the light of day that needs to be critical about, part of that we need to reject.

But everything comes to an end. Past is the past and even then, people undoubtedly did their best. We can learn from the past and make things better in the future. Luckily, we have already learned from our mistakes and moved on to a new level in our upbringing principles. Both attitude and behavior have changed. We have learned that holding on to our long tradition of negativity eats our chances of success in the world.

Power of positivity

There is an enormous amount of unused mental, social, and physical resources in humans. Positivity is a constructive force and negativity is a consuming force. Every one of us is able to achieve more than we are expected to. Known fact is that we use only less than 10 percent of our brain capacity. For example, the ability to produce visual ideas can be multiplied by a thousand times by imaginative work.

There are as much positive forces in us there are negative. The balance between good and evil is equal. It up to our own choices which one we trust more and which one we allow to occupy us more. Negative feelings and thoughts take the upper hand from us unfortunately quite easily and the positivity is forgotten somewhere behind. You can choose positively.

There are not just problems, you hold the keys to the solutions. In the midst of life, you tend lose those keys. Therefore you need new perspectives, eye openers. Through positive thinking and positive attitude towards life it is possible for everyone. Therefore, positive thinking can work as an excellent tool in situations of everyday life and in problem solving.

Listening to your heart

Deep down within yourself, you know what is best for you and what to do with your life. Nobody else can know better. You are the undisputed expert of your own life. This knowledge comes from the heart!

It is important to learn to listen to your heart. This knowledge guides our choices in life in the good and in the bad. We get out of life what we unconsciously believe.

Positive thinking and its meaning

If I'd had to summarize what I have learned in to one sentence, I would say: do not let bad things dwell on your thoughts (Confucious)

Positive thinker sees constantly new opportunities in life. He is open and natural and believes indefinitely in himself. Positive thinker experiences difficulties of life as a challenge, whereby he lives more on this day and future than the past.

Successful performances, positive images of the, a safe living atmosphere and encouragement are all likely to increase people's self-esteem, self-respect, and positive attitudes towards other people and the actions people want to participate in.

Positive person radiates energy that easily transfers to other people. We should speak out good and nice thing aloud. It is not good to keep positive feelings, joys, success and funny events hidden, because sharing them will increase positive experiences. Therefore, it is essential that teachers, youth workers, parents and coaches think positively.

The following list shows the key measures for positive thinking:

1. Dedicate yourself to what you master.
2. See new things as possibilities.
3. Don't adjust to other people's expectations.
4. Create your self-image by strengthening human relationships.
5. Trust yourself and believe in your own potential.
6. Face difficulties as challenges.
7. Focus thoroughly on what you are doing.
8. Do thing you love and from which you get a good feeling.
9. Live this day, don't hanker for the past.
10. Think for what you can learn.

The goal of positive thinking is to get people to take a development-oriented and enthusiastic view on their future. Positive thinking enables people to find positive perquisites for fulfilling a diverse

life. It not insignificant in what kind of a world you live in. People thinking less of themselves do not give themselves a chance to succeed. They bombard themselves constantly with different negative things.

Positive thinking is a resource, realizing that creates activity in a person, resource that can be made use of in many ways. Person must consciously develop the positivity within as an important part of his own.

Positive perspective

It is two different things to state that "my child is disturbed" or "my child has a problem". The first approach is negative, usually leading into deeper anxiety, the latter is positive, creating possibilities. So, it's beneficial to choose positive approach, because problems can be tackled, and you can start resolving them. The problem is the diversity of therapeutic interpretations. One can interpret that the problem of a child or an adult is caused by one thing and someone else is certain that it's caused by another. Everyone believes in their own interpretation, but who is right? It's not proven by anyone, it's an assumption. It might feel right, there is no other indicator than your own feelings. It would be important to find such explanations that don't focus on looking for causes or culprits but lead to problem solutions that help coping with a difficult situation. Such solutions give hope and lead out from impasse situations. Since it's impossible to prove life settlements true or false, it's more important to get the problem solved.

10 attributes of a positive thinker

Psychological research has given the following definitions of these ten characteristics.

- **Hopefulness:** Believes in positive outcomes and expects them even in front of difficulties, challenges and crisis.
- **Enthusiasm:** Has enormous amount of interest, positive energy, passion or personal motivation
- **Faith:** Trust himself and others and/or possess higher spiritual strength, that gives support and guidance when needed.
- **Authenticity:** Personally, committed to honesty, openness and kindness; live according to their own standards.
- **Courage:** It is ready to take risks and cope with fears even when the outcome is uncertain.
- **Certainty:** Is convinced of his abilities, capabilities and resources.
- **Determination:** Seeks tirelessly to sort out purpose, meaning or justification.
- **Patience:** Prepares to wait for opportunity, things to mature or result from himself and others.
- **Composure:** Maintains calmness and balanced regarding everyday difficulties, challenges or distress; uses time to think and ponder.
- **Concentration:** Targets attention by setting goals and prioritizing things.

Positive thinking test

All the ten attributes are innate. They are in a varying degree hidden by our negative programming and influences. Luckily they can be Onneksi niitä voi aina tietoisesti yrittää herättää eloon.

Fortunately, they can always be deliberately attempted to revive.

The first step in rediscovering and activating these ten attributes is to define how they are realized in me. To what extent I usually am hopeful, patient, certain and so forth.

The test is not perfect, in the matter of fact there is no such thing as the perfect test. All the tests of this kind are constantly under “development”. They will get better over time. Hundreds of people have tested themselves through this test and have been convinced by it. When you prepare for the test, keep in mind that there is a total of fifty statements that reflect the thoughts and behavioral patterns of positive thinking. You don’t know to which attribute they belong to, not before the test but after. This way prejudice is avoided. Follow the instructions and be as honest and straight forward as you possibly can. These are not supposed to be trick questions.

Accept your first thought. Try not to read too much behind the question. Follow your own interpretation to the question and treat it according to your first reaction.

Execution of the test

Write down on paper how often each, how often the thoughts, feelings, or actions of each claim fit into your life. Use a scale of 0 to 5.

5: Almost always

4: Mostly

3: Usually

2: Occasionally

1: Barely ever

0: Not suitable for me; I do not know

Claim

1 I know there is a source outside of myself that gives me strength.

2 I've dedicated my life to live for the benefit of the high ideals and purposes.

3 I will not allow mistakes to depress me.

4 I give people time to think about their own solutions.

5 In line with my character, I hold on to plans and projects.

6 I see individual events as part of a larger plan.

7 I will not let danger or crisis paralyze myself.

8 I keep my emotions under control.

9 I speak the truth.

10 I do not let doubt affect my pursuit to achieve valuable goal.

11 I rise to the occasion when goals seem unattainable.

12 I always aim for my goals, even in the midst of daily adversity.

13 I speak for unpopular ideas if I think they are valuable.

14 I use the same criteria assessing myself as use for others too.

15 I try consciously take things calm.

16 I wake up in the morning feeling excitement about the day ahead.

17 I control my stress level.

18 I Succeed by finding interesting needs and filling them.

19 I stick to my goals.

20 I will take action that is interesting to me, even if achieving a good outcome would be obscured.

21 Meet challenges in a controlled way.

22 I will keep my course even if things get an uncertain turn.

23 I will not let fear and inferiority control my actions.

24 I will not allow concerns of the outcome interfere with my peace of mind.

25 I will focus my energy where it is most useful.

26 I can control my worries and annoyances.

27 I gather needed resources beforehand to get a job done.

28 I act hopefully for the things that are coming.

29 I contribute to the spirit of the group even in difficult circumstances.

30 I practice self-encouragement with my skills and my vision of life.

31 I use my powers to projects that interests others.

32 I devise a plan in my mind how to job will be done.

33 I am determined to go forward.

34 I have a clear picture of where I want to spend my life.

35 I will not let circumstances bother me.

- 36 I try to minimize the impact of my own doubts and fears.
 37 I will not act or speak hastily without considering the consequences.
 38 I will not withdraw myself and hope for others to complete the job.
 39 I avoid spreading gossip.
 40 I am positively hopeful in my attitudes and expectations.
 41 I keep my head up high when things are not going well.
 42 I will not let worries get me.
 43 I am not part of "as long as it gets done somehow"-school that makes hasty decisions.
 44 I am energetic when reaching for my goals.
 45 I dedicate myself to the hobbies that are necessary to achieve the goals.
 46 I get a boost from my life.
 47 I treat people equally and fairly.
 48 I will not let my fears set my goals.
 49 I refuse to persuade another person to attack another.
 50 I will not panic when facing difficulties.

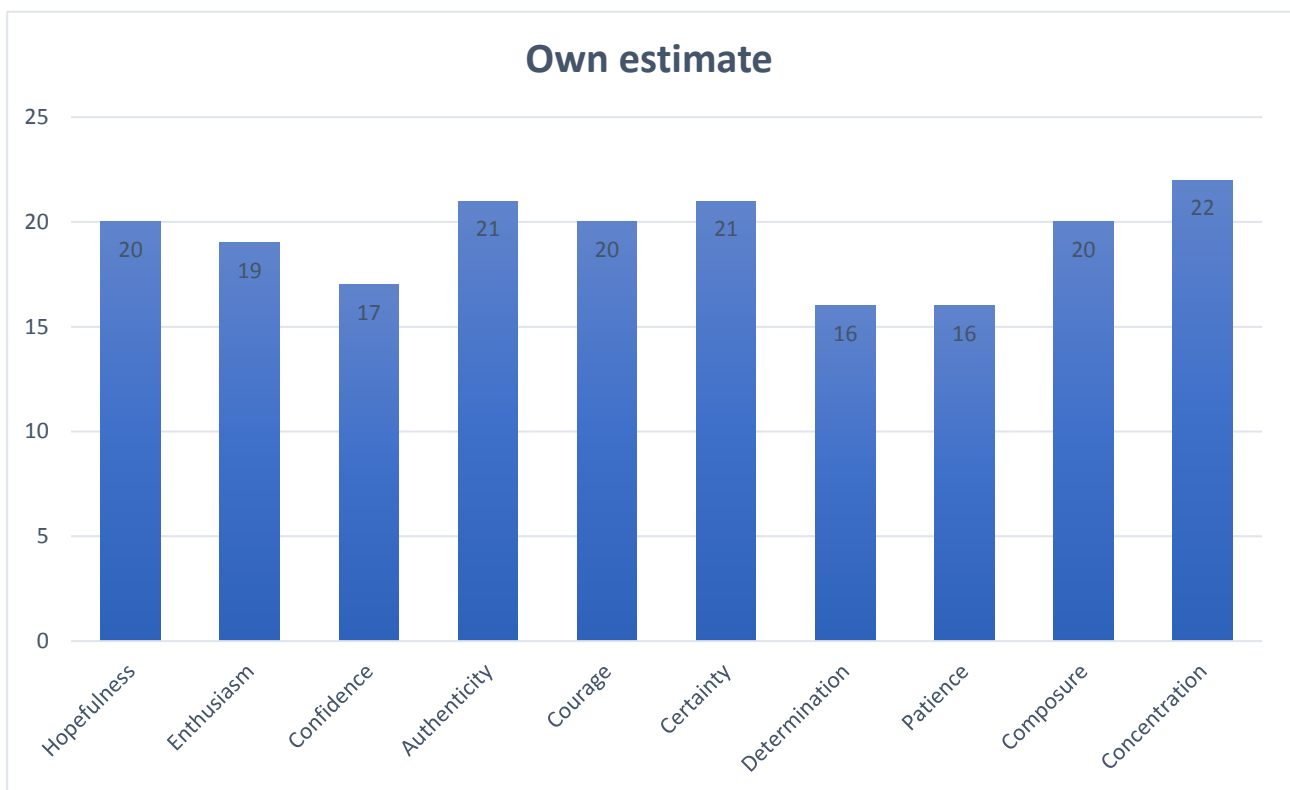
Test results

The test results will determine the score for each positive property from the list below. Mark answers down from the paper to each five claims that are related to a positive attribute. (Example claims 21,28,36,40 ja 41 describe thoughts expressing hopefulness and behavioral patterns.) When answers are marked down, the scores of the five answers are calculated together to obtain the total score for each attribute. Start counting scores now.

Hopefulness: 21,28,36,40, 41
 Enthusiasm: 16,18,31,44,46
 Faith: 1,2,6,30,42
 Authenticity: 9,14,39,47,49
 Courage: 7,13,20,22,29
 Certainty: 3,10,17,23,33
 Determination: 5,11,27,32,38
 Patience: 4,15,24,37,43
 Composure: 8,26,35,48,50
 Concentration: 12,19,25,34,45

Own estimation score calculated together:

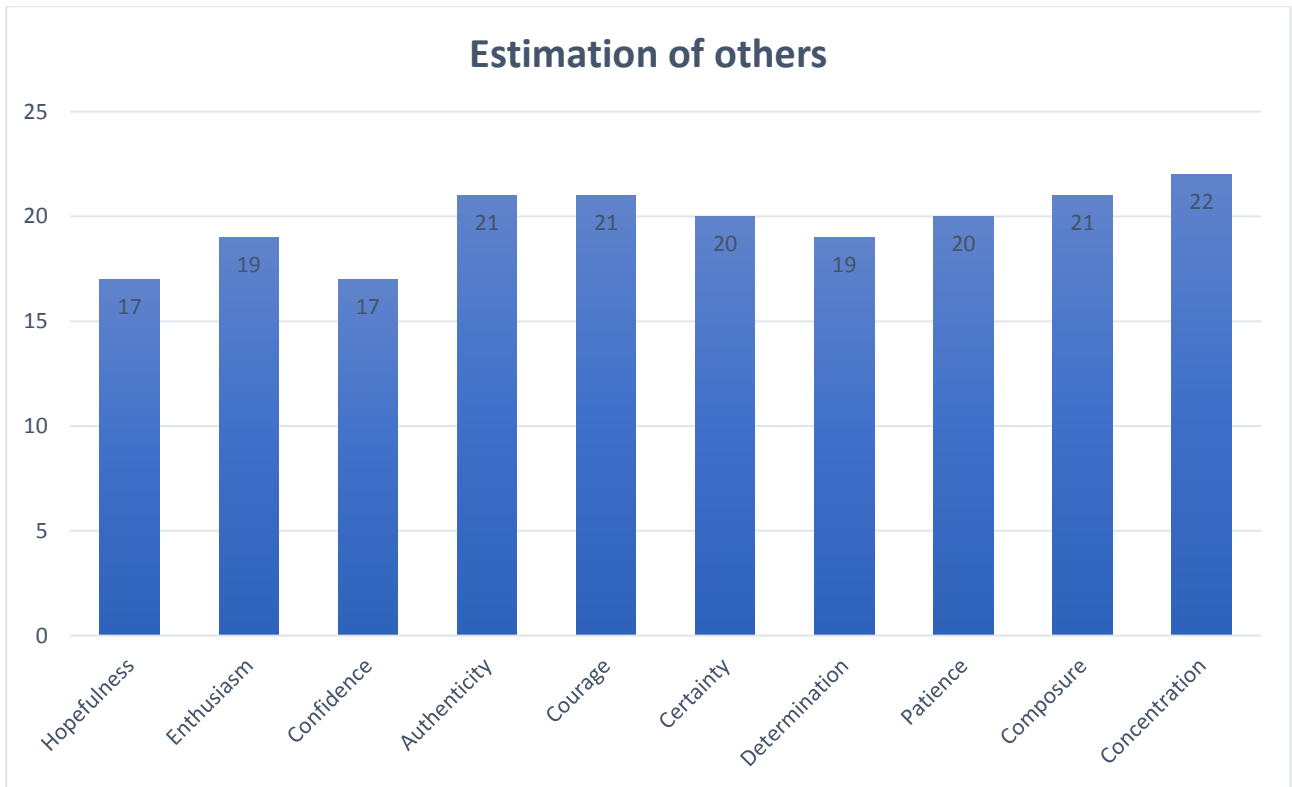
Hopefulness: 20
Enthusiasm: 19
Faith: 17
Authenticity: 21
Courage: 20
Certainty: 21
Determination: 16
Patience: 16
Composure: 20
Concentration: 22



Estimation of clubs' other teachers about me:

Respondents 7
Results averaged

- Hopefulness: 17
- Enthusiasm: 19
- Faith: 17
- Authenticity: 21
- Courage: 21
- Certainty: 20
- Determination: 19
- Patience: 20
- Composure: 21
- Concentration: 22



Interpretation of results

Result above 20 points need to be considered high. The results of individual answers over three points are high. Sometimes we underestimate our power. This may have to do with the fact that some of us are not aware of them or may not have received feedback from others.

The attributes of less than 19 points should be examined more closely. Also, scores below three points per question deserve further examination. Most of us are quite harsh on ourselves, so lower than expected scores are not very surprising. It has been found that most people are openly modest and don't want to think too much of themselves. On the other hand, I recommend focusing on scores lower than expected.

Situation appropriate positive thinking

You will find, without exception, that we embrace the features to varying degrees, depending on the circumstances or the situation. Remember that we all have these characteristics by nature. Most of the participants in the test think that all low scores are "bad" and all high "good" and that the purpose is to move from the bottom up. But I haven't said that. Let me ask you a question: Do you think it is possible to own too much of a particular attribute?

360-degree feedback

Most self-evaluations, such as the positive thinking test, tend to be one-sided. It is difficult for us to be impartial estimating ourselves. In order to achieve maximum accuracy, I recommend 360-degree feedback.

I asked other teachers at our school (7) to present their own views of me, through positive thinking test. Respondents have known me for over 20 years.

The results had a slight dispersion which is normal when every appraiser understands the claims in their own way.

The views are slightly different from my own. This test gives a good idea of how others think about me. In this way, I can develop myself from the received feedback.

Man is very much a prisoner of his own thoughts, speech, deeds and attitudes.

Positive feedback gives you wings

Each of us knows how good it feels when you get positive feedback on your work. It is like an extra energy boost that gives you wings. Work in itself can be very rewarding, but in the long run it will not last that long unless you get feedback from your superiors and coworkers. We live in a culture where you have learned though out the centuries to keep positive feedback to yourself. Negative feedback is given when a employee has done something wrong. But jobs well done go without notice and reward. They are considered a foregone conclusions. There lies the problem, when there is no feedback you don't know how the work goes. Gradually, the employee's feeling that their own work is not important and meaningful is increasing. The inevitable consequence is a reduction in work motivation, fatigue and tiredness. Superiors know this and expect the work to go on as usual, but they are incapable and unwilling to give positive feedback, even though the employee has earned it.

Why feedback and especially positive feedback are so important to us? Man is a social animal. We have been created to live in relation to other people, our companions, and in relation to them we genuinely know what we are and what kind we as a person. Feedback is essential part of our identity formation and it is generated through interaction. It's about the foundation of self-esteem, the need for a little boy or a girl to hear that they are important to their parents and that the parents love his/her persona.

It's easy to love a child when he/she is good, brings home good grades or does well in Taekwondo. The child has in a way earned our love. We pat him/her on the back, give praise and give positive feedback. But what happens to our love then when the child is crying in bad temper and throws him/herself on the floor kicking and screaming or repeats a year in school or fails in a sport contest? We feel annoyance, disappointment and can barely contain our behavior. Our love is unfortunately often conditional: you get as much you deserve. First you have to perform, succeed. However, the basic question of every child is: Am I ok? If the child is only noticed when his/her actions fulfill the positive expectations; I'm not liked, I not ok? When a child can't afford losing his/her parents love, he/she starts to earn it. I'll be good and do whatever my parents want me to, and so forth. The child then denies him/herself, his/her own feelings and needs and starts to realize the life wished by the parents. I believe that it is the lack positive thinking that is the root cause of Finnish work-a-holism. You perform and perform just to be good enough, to be accepted, and these is no boundaries to the performing. You perform even then when there is no one else demanding you to perform. The

demand is conditioned, and good conscience will only come after you have worked yourself to half to death.

Absolute acceptance is the basic thing of a child and means that his/her personality is enough for the basis of love. No need for performance, no evidence, mere existence is enough.

Thank you is feedback

Thanking publicly, encouraging and rewarding is an effective way to show your attention to other people. The best reward you can get is *thank you*. Thanking will make the receiver and giver happy. Thank you is like a good seasoning: it makes the food more delicious or gives it a whole new flavor. Thank you is a renewable power, that makes you try time after time even more. Thank you is encouraging and courtesy. Rejoice aloud for another's success, thank him/her for what they do.

Teacher

A teacher has a significant role to play in sharing positive educational models and values. A teacher is an important adult model, a model that the young person identifies as consciously and unconsciously. Parents also wish for their child to have a teacher with a positive attitude toward life and with a sense of responsibility, patience and understanding.

A juvenile is vulnerable to influences, emphasizing the responsibility of a teacher. A teacher can influence the emergence of a positive atmosphere if he or she has enough time for the young people to be taught. A teacher must be able to translate the pessimism and cynicism of the young into optimism and realism. The teacher must be open and genuine; he/she is not afraid of expressing his/her own feelings.

Trust between the teacher and the young gives the opportunity to create a harmonious and pleasant atmosphere. If there is a state of trust between two people, it can be maintained through interpersonal skills throughout the relationship. If there is no trust, then no qualification, good intentions or time will help.

Teacher in interaction

The teacher has a right to educate, which leads to the responsibility for education. Acting as a teacher includes several dimensions; a young person lives simultaneously in a biological, physical, social, and cultural historical environment.

In practical youth activities, the opportunities for education are great, but they also make the educational work demanding, difficult and interesting. As a result of persistent and determined work, one can gradually create a trustworthy, safe and open teacher-youth from which education can go forward. The meaning of a positive atmosphere is important.

As performance requirements and pressures grow, we must deal with strong emotional experiences, which requires the teacher to have real expertise. Instead of negative outbursts and outbursts of emotions, the teacher should be able to constantly engage in constructive interaction.

Expectations for the teacher

There are many expectations for the teacher. Teacher must be able to justify his/her actions in the cross-pressure of different demands. Teacher might have to justify wide range of things to parents. The expectations created by the social environment are not always similar, because there are differences of opinion between people. That is why there is no teacher who could agree with everyone. The teacher must be able to retain his/her authority, identity and justifiable line.

Teachers perspective

In order to function in a versatile and holistic way, the teacher should be able to create him/herself a philosophy to rely on, upon which he can implement his own personal teaching model. On the other hand, the traits of the teacher's personality, his own social appreciation, and his views appear in teaching. Firmness is required from a teacher; he/she cannot be overly soft or overly adaptable. Teacher must be fair and just. Teacher should be able to face young people openly, honestly, closely and with credibility. Truly young people are faced through caring. If necessary, the teacher must also be able to protect him/herself. Healthy selfishness is also necessary in the teacher's work. You have to be able to set limits for your own work, thus avoiding burnout.

Teachers authenticity

Young people appreciate genuine adults. Authenticity is an inherent behavior, unobstructed self-acceptance the way you are. A genuine person does not have to pretend to be better or worse than he/she is, which is why he/she trusts in his/her own abilities and skills.

In a positive atmosphere, it is important that the teacher monitors the behavior of an individual, as well as the whole group, and prevents or corrects states that weaken motivation. In higher performance models, the teacher must be able to break the laziness of the young and make them understand the meaning of the activity being performed. The attitude of a weakly motivated young person should change. He must be asked directly what the goals are.

Pressuring too hard is never sensible. For this reason, the teacher must avoid all possible means of generating unnecessary social losses. The humiliation, neglect, contempt or indifferent attitude of young people is not part of the teacher's qualities.

Also, the teacher should not woo for the popularity of the young. Wooing for the most part dates back to teachers' insecurities or weak self-esteem. The teacher should also not fall into self-praise or collecting admiration, whereby the energy meant for teaching may go to maintaining his/her own facade.

Positive attributes of a teacher

Act as a model.

Has the ability to inspire young people.

Has good knowledge how to teach or how to coach the subject of the hobby.

Is fair.

Manages teaching techniques.

Knows the laws of group behavior.

Understands the difficulties of young people at different stages of development.

Has a holistic approach to activities.

Is persistent

Constantly educating him/herself.

Afterword

Trusting and leaning on positive forces brave people's business. It's like parachuting. When the parachutist jumps out of the plane, he throws himself into emptiness. You can never be 100% sure that the parachute will open. You just have to trust that the parachute will carry you. Another possibility is to stay on the plane and not jump at all. You come down without jumping but in that case the rush from the jump and experience defeating yourself are unaccomplished. So you have to take a chance.

The purpose of this thesis is to clarify to myself the importance of positive thinking and encouragement in my own appearance as a Taekwondo teacher. And thus, create a positive and stimulating atmosphere for the exercises. I have also had to look at myself, my background and my influence. Why? - Because I want to be a good and evolving Teacher.

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