

EMOTIONAL INTEGRITY: WILLINGNESS TO MOVE OUTSIDE THE COMFORT ZONES OF TEACHING

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We all know that the world changes day by day and there are no doubts that the modern society is not the same as an old one. The same happens to education system also – nowadays being teacher does not mean only being an instructor in different processes of getting education, it also includes being a creative facilitator who accompanies a student in all ways of learning. . Today's children are under more pressure than ever before. One of the sources of pressure on children today is that they live with different levels of societal expectations. Contemporary teachers should give attention to this aspect. This results in new expectations from the teacher. Students are profoundly affected by the teacher's love and affection, his character, his competence, and his moral commitment. The teacher has to gain the trust of students. This is possible only when the teacher has courage to acknowledge his true feelings, wants and desires without judging them with the societal lens. In core it is about being honest with yourself. This is possible only if he could become a person with emotional integrity.

Emotional Integrity involves being honest with *yourself* and facing uncomfortable or painful truths. It's more about internal choices than external ones. Human beings have a natural tendency to avoid difficult things, like painful feelings, conflict, problems, or our own weaknesses. It will make us to take the easier route which becomes a threat to our Emotional integrity.

Ways to develop Emotional Integrity:

No one can be perfect. Everyone's emotional Integrity will often be tested through the course of our lives. Teachers are not exceptions. As we try, we may fail at times as teachers. But we can try our best. After all, we are only human. The emotional integrity of a teacher becomes stronger when he/she understands the following:

- Painful feelings when faced and dealt with situations in which students are involved are temporary.
- Know that when the teacher is not honest with himself, it may possibly hurt the children around him.
- Taking the easier route always comes with more uncomfortable consequences.
- Speaking truth with compassion and care solves many problems in classrooms.
- It is honest to accept and face mistakes and weaknesses rather than ignore them.

We teach who we are

The subjects a teacher teaches are large and complex. So the teacher dedicates to reading and research. But the students he teaches are larger and even more complex. To see them clearly and see them whole, and respond to them wisely the teacher should know that we teach who we are. Teaching emerges from one's inwardness and viewed from this angle, teaching holds a mirror to the soul. Knowing oneself is as crucial to good teaching as knowing the students and the subject. We need to open a new frontier in our exploration of good teaching: need to interweave intellectual, emotional, and spiritual paths to teaching in our pedagogical discourse.

Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique. It comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher. In every class the ability to connect with students depends on the emotional integrity of the teacher. So we have to recover the heart to teach which requires reclaiming our relationship with the teacher within. We may find ourselves pestered by external expectations that can twist our identity and integrity. It speaks not of what ought to be, but of what is real for us, of what is true. The voice of the inward teacher reminds us about our potentials and limits.

Developing emotional integrity means

- recognizing and labeling one's feelings
 - assessing one's strengths and limitations
 - regulating emotions, managing stress, motivating oneself
 - showing empathy and taking others' perspectives
 - recognizing and gathering diverse and available supports
 - clear communication and accurate listening
 - cooperation and constructive conflict resolution
 - knowing when and how to be a good leader
 - making choices based on consideration of feelings, goals and outcomes
 - planning and enacting solutions with potential obstacles anticipated
 - Staying focused is a great lever for emotional control
- **Always Look For The Positive Side Of Any Situation**

The teacher should not forget about the most important weapon in the emotional arsenal- attitude. Things cannot always go the way we planned and ultimately if they did, life wouldn't really be that challenging. So he should know:

- Goals can be redefined which may be a little further out of reach than before.
- Do not close your heart and withdraw though this is more painful and challenging
- See the experience through the wider lens of how it shaped and refined you
- Do the work of forgiveness and acceptance
- **Leave with a trust that *there is enough for everyone***

Emotional Integrity is when what you are feeling, thinking, and how you look are congruent. Basically if you are sad you feel, think and look sad. The heart of emotional integrity is about acceptance. The more you accept your feelings and thoughts about your feelings the easier it is to express them. So the question is why do you as a teacher want to have emotional integrity?

Need of emotional integrity in classrooms

Every child should feel respected and trusted by teachers and then only we can expect them to be respectful and to trust teachers. Students are pretty good at reading adults. If the teacher wants to establish a genuine relationship with children, he/she should be willing to help, give choices, and respect that they can also be experts on certain things. If that happens, children will surely rise to expectations. They respond as individuals with strengths and opinions. These things do not happen overnight. Building trust takes time, patience and consistency.

We cannot expect every learning environment to be free from conflict and differences of opinion because these situations are parts of human life. But the teacher has to help them to understand that even if they disagree with someone they still need to treat them respectfully. Maintaining emotional control even in a heated situation and considering other's perspective don't always come naturally; they need to be moulded, developed and practiced. This can be made easier by a teacher if he personifies his/her emotional integrity.

Challenges

There will be situations where the values and behaviours the teacher promotes run counter to the values and behaviours in the children's home, school, or society. The safe way is letting them know that these are the norms and expectations. The teacher cannot set expectations in other parts of their life, but can encourage them to try them outside and this will definitely help them in situations where they need to recover from a loss or a bad performance. The person who guides is the most important aspect. A teacher has the potential to build character, but the leadership of the person having no emotional integrity will teach children to be aggressive and unethical. So, if we want to build positive character in children, the teacher in charge needs to be honest about his own emotions.

The teachers often prefer to ignore, hold back, or deny emotion, leading to defective decision-making. Loving yourself, being proud of yourself, and believing that you are worthy of love and happiness shows emotional courage. Essentially, it is related to self-acceptance, together with a willingness to move outside our comfort zone, to explore new means of being that may not be common. It is like a having the courage to be unconditionally happy and being ready to offer your heart without expecting something in return.

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