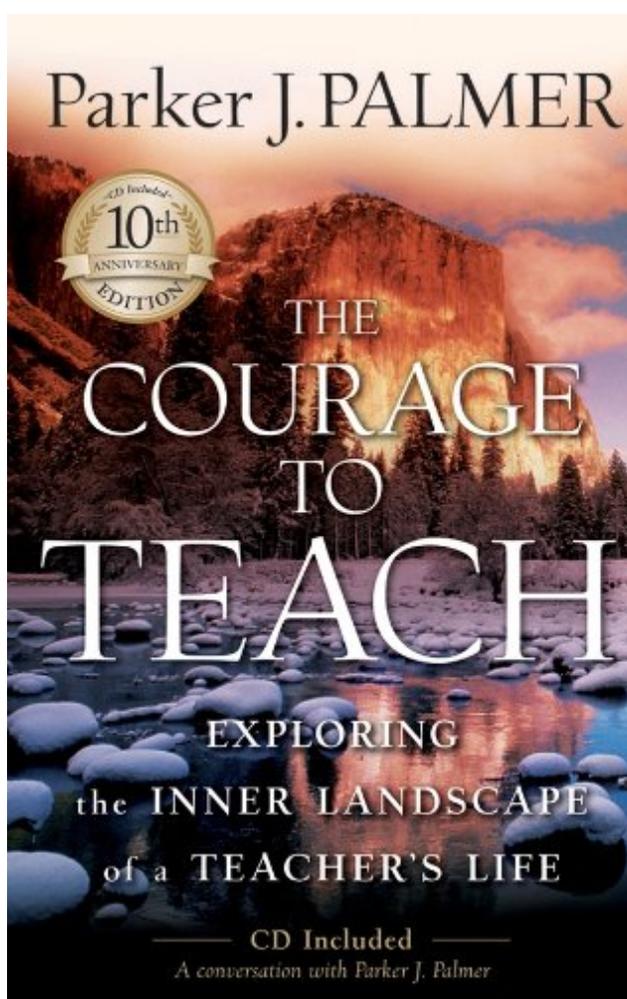


Executive Book Summary for *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*



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Executive Book Summary

The Courage To Teach written by Parker J. Palmer reflects on an educator's spirit, emotion and intellect and how this influences their teaching. This book connects to theories of Leadership including Trait Approach, Servant Leadership, Skills Approach, Adaptive Leadership and Transformational Leadership

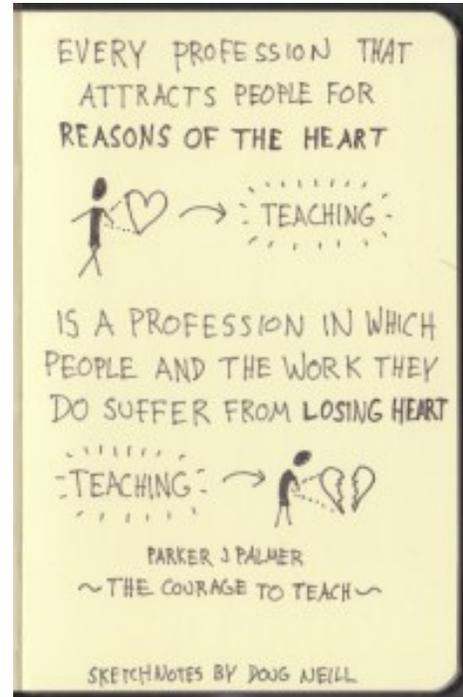


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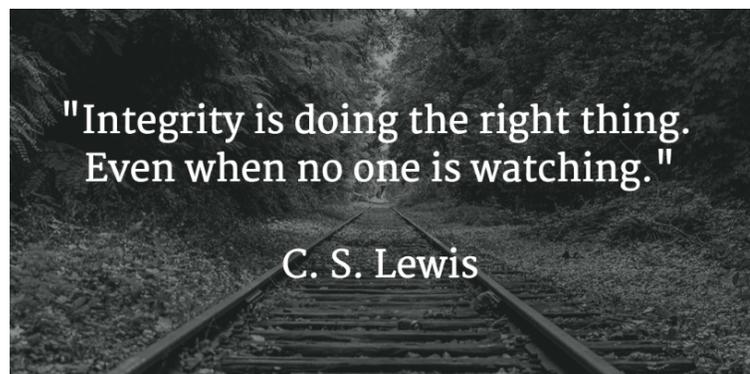
Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher.

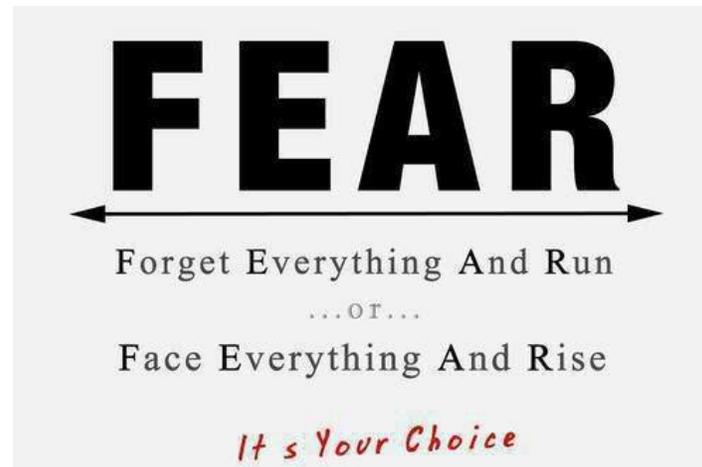
- Parker J. Palmer

Chapter One Summary

Chapter One: The Heart of a Teacher: Identity and Integrity in Teaching...

focuses on good teaching coming from the integrity and identity of the teacher and not from technique (Palmer, 1998, p. 10). Staying true to one's identity and integrity leaves room for the educator to connect to the students and builds a relationship where students can feel heart and emotion and build a community of learners. Palmer (1998) explains that "by identity and integrity I do not mean only our noble features, or the good deeds we do...by identity I mean an evolving nexus where all the forces that constitute my life converge in the mystery of self...by integrity I mean whatever I am able to find within that nexus as its vectors form and re-form the pattern of my life" (p. 13).

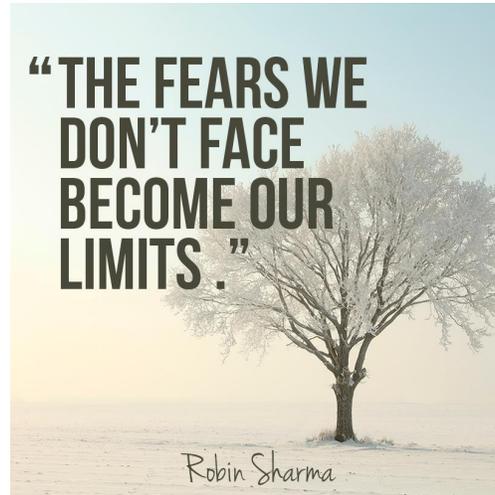




Chapter Two Summary

Chapter Two: A Culture of Fear: Education and the Disconnected Life...

focuses on fear. Palmer suggests that although fear is normal, we need to be aware of our fears and own them so that they do not restrict our actions and goals, ultimately we must not let our fears alter our identities and affect our capacities to be connected and have a relationship with our students. Palmer believes that “there is a deeper reason for our blindness to our students’ fears, and it is more daunting: we cannot see the fear in our students until we see the fear in ourselves. When we deny our own condition, we resist seeing anything in others that might remind us of who, and how, we really are” (1998, p. 48). Our self-confidence affects our abilities to be leaders because our self-assurance is compromised (Northouse, 2016, p. 24).



Wholeness is not achieved by cutting off a portion of one's being, but by integration of the contraries.

C.G. Jung

quotation

Chapter Three Summary

Chapter Three: The Hidden Wholeness: Paradox in Teaching and Learning...

focuses on paradox and how to achieve wholeness within teaching and learning. Looking at the self as an educator as well as the space and how the dynamics of the learning environment can affect the learning. Palmer presents six paradoxes that contribute to the classroom and pedagogical design.

1. "The space should be bounded and open"
2. "the space should be hospitable and 'charged'"
3. "the space should invite the voice of the individual and the voice of the group"

4. “the space should honor the ‘little’ stories of the students and the ‘big’ stories of the disciplines and tradition”
5. “the space should support solitude and surround it with the resources of community”
6. “the space should welcome both silence and speech” (Palmer, 1998, p. 76).



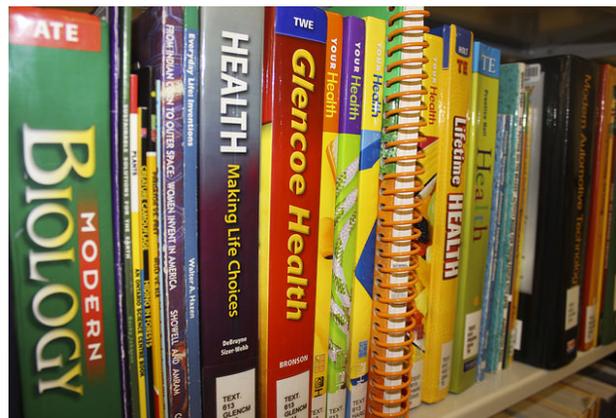
Chapter Four Summary

Chapter Four: Knowing in Community: Joined by the Grace of Great Things...

focuses on community, “the kind of community that teaching and learning require, that can help renew and express the capacity for connectedness at the heart of authentic education” (Palmer, 1998, p. 92). In previous chapters it was important to explore and understand the educator’s inner life but now we must move into understanding how understanding one’s self and being true to that identity helps us connect with others and build a community of learners.

Palmer suggests that education needs a certain kind of community. He explores three models, the therapeutic, marketing and civic. In the therapeutic model, intimacy is considered to be the best therapy when it comes to pain of disconnection (1998, p. 92). Referring to a love for learning, connectedness and truth in relationships. In the civic model, looks at the range of relationships between strangers that mutually respect a common space and common goals

although they may not have a personal relationship. They learn to cooperate and work with others to solve problems (Palmer, 1998, p. 94). The marketing model, focusses on strengthening relationships to create better productivity and satisfy its customers (Palmer, 1998, p. 95). Ultimately we are making an attempt to build a community of truth where educators help students explore ideas and concepts to gain knowledge and without being connected to their educators and having trust in them, how can they believe in what we are teaching them, how can we expect them to participate in this process.



Chapter Five Summary

Chapter Five: Teaching in Community: A Subject-Centered Education...

focusses on subject-centered education. As Palmer explains, “the subject-centered classroom is characterized by the fact that the third thing has a presence so real, so vivid, so vocal, that it can hold teacher and students alike accountable for what they say and do” (1998, p. 48). Here the students and teachings work together to learn, no power binaries are present.

HAPPINESS IS

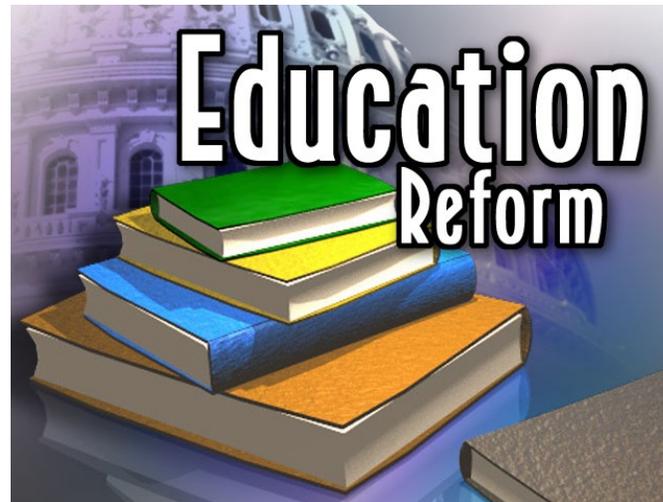


...working with
great people.

Chapter Six Summary

Chapter Six: Learning in Community: The Conversation of Colleagues...

focuses on how to branch out and learn from and with other teachers. Although typically one educator works with a group of students, our biggest resource to one another are other teachers, our colleagues. Palmer agrees we are each other's resources (1998, p. 146). With regards to leadership, "we have a tendency to contrast communities, which are supposed to be leaderless, with institutions, which need leaders...community is a dynamic state of affairs that demands leadership at every turn" (Palmer, 1998, p. 161). Leaders are needed to help direct individuals and help individuals build self-confidence in recognizing their capabilities.



Chapter Seven Summary

Chapter Seven: Divided No More: Teaching from a Heart of Hope...

focuses on educational reform. Palmer suggests that a movement towards education reform is necessary and that educators need to make the movement public so that it is recognized and has strength. He explores a four stage model for movement but explains clearly that the model does not work in sequence and it is possible that within the stages sometimes “they overlap, circle back, and sometimes play leapfrog with each other” (1998, p. 172).

Stage 1. “Isolated individuals make an inward decision to live ‘divided no more,’ finding a center for their lives outside of institutions”

Stage 2. “these individuals begin to discover one another and form communities of congruence that offer mutual support and opportunities to develop a shared vision”

Stage 3. “these communities start going public, learning to convert their private concerns into public issues they are and receiving vital critiques in the process”

Stage 4. “a system of alternative rewards emerges to sustain the movement’s vision and to put pressure for change on the standard institutional reward system”

(Palmer, 1998, p. 172).



Connections to Leadership

Trait Approach's

- discusses major leadership traits which include intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity and sociability
- "leaders with integrity inspire confidence in others because they can be trusted to do what they say they are going to do" (Northouse, 2016, p. 25)
- this connection is presented in Palmer's explanation of how integrity is important in teaching. To be a great educator, one's leadership traits must present integrity this way students can rely on their educators

- when our self-confidence is compromised, it affects our abilities to influence others and be a positive role model

Servant Leadership

- the ways in which we serve our students
- our passions to teach and expect nothing in return

Skills Approach

- leader-centered
- professional learning community of educators using each other as resources
- moving from one's personality to learned and developed skills

Adaptive Leadership

- helping individuals adapt to create a change, within the book we explore a change towards education reform
- supporting individuals to deal with problems, change and challenges

Transformational Leadership

- working together to inspire others
- working as a team with a group of individuals sharing common goals



References

Northouse, Peter G. (2016). *Leadership: Theory and Practice 7th Ed.* United States of America: SAGE Publications.

Palmer, Parker J. (1998). *The Courage To Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Books.