

WHAT AMERICAN STUDENTS EXPECT FROM THEIR TEACHER

Because its special function and purpose, a university brings together members of several different generations. Some within the community successfully bridge what has so often been called the "generation gap". Others, of course, do not. Whether or not a professor has been able to effectively communicate with his students is certainly a criteria for evaluating how good he is at this work.

Thus this short piece is dedicated to all our professors who have the desire to be good teachers, who want to maintain their civility, their sanity and most of all, to survive.

Rule Number One : Listen. If you insist upon doing all the talking you won't learn much from us. And however senseless we may sometimes appear to be, you may be surprised at how much sense we can talk.

Rule Number Two : Smile. You would be surprised how often you appear glaring, sneering, frowning, or disgusted when you look or talk to us deliberately or unconsciously. We know when you are hostile. Hostility breeds hostility. Can you communicate with someone who is openly antagonistic ?

Rule Number Three : Level with us. We are open and honest (may be

we have not learned the tricks of the trade ?). If you talk to us in that spirit, you will find there is little, perhaps nothing, we cannot talk about.

Rule Number Four : Please do not try to be one of us. It is truly pathetic to see creatures over 30 who, though they may be unsympathetic with our views, think they will be accepted as part of the university "thing" if they dress, talk, act and look like us. Of course, there are some who honestly think and act like our generation. But others : Remember "do your own thing" is one of our mottos. Translated, we will respect your beliefs, attitudes, and life-style if you honestly believe in them and stand up for them. Do not try to be something you are not.

Rule Number Five : Share with us your own finest hopes, your finest purposes. Certainly idealists were no rarer in your generation than they are in ours. Sharing dreams is a sure-fire method of communication.

Rule Number Six : Believe in us. We will sense it if you do. And, eventually if not now, we will respond to that belief.

Rule Number Seven : Do not ask us why look the way we do. Most of

us cannot explain it to our parents. And some of us, do not really even know.

Rule Number Eight : Do not go in with the attitude that one day we will come around. May be we will; chances are we would not. Remember that we live in a different world. Be flexible in your own thinking and communicate your flexibility to us.

Rule Number Nine : You have made the study of a subject your life's work. It is exciting and living to you. Show us why and how ?

Rule Number Ten : Open our

minds. Do not mould them. There are very few right answers in life. Ask us the right questions; do not give us the 'right' answers. Let us discover them for ourselves.

Rule Number Eleven : Let us make mistakes. You did.

Think about it. These are not an infallible set of rules. But they just might work.

[Extracts from "Role and Responsibility of Teachers". New Delhi, University Grants Commission, 1981. Pp. 51-52]

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