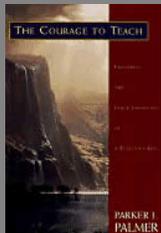


# Seven Habits of Effective Teachers

Reflections on nourishing the self who teaches



*Timothy A. Pychyl*  
Department of Psychology

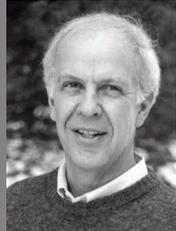


Parker Palmer



## Learning in Community: The conversation of colleagues

- The resources we need in order to grow as teachers are abundant within the community of colleagues. How can we emerge from our privatization and create a continuing conversation about pedagogy that will allow us to tap that abundance? **Good talk about good teaching is what we need** - to enhance both our professional practice and the selfhood from which it comes. (Palmer, 1998)



Parker Palmer



## Thoughts about speaking

“There is an old Quaker saying I have always loved: ‘Don’t speak unless you can improve upon the silence.’ It is an intimidating counsel if taken literally, but that is not how it is meant. **It simply reminds us that the words we speak about important things are always partial and penultimate, so they must be chosen with care and abandon** - care because we want to tell the truth, abandon because the truth can never be told as long as we are in tight control”

(Palmer in Forward to O’Reilly, 1998, p. ix).

## Good talk about good teaching - Ours

### Purpose today . . .

- Something thoughtful & thought provoking
- Orchestrate a number of “voices”
- Create many places of engagement through something potentially familiar
- Challenge assumptions
- Offer practical suggestions for change



My pace . . . your questions

(there’s no exam, this is not an ideal example of “teaching”)

## Good talk about good teaching - Others



Bell Hooks



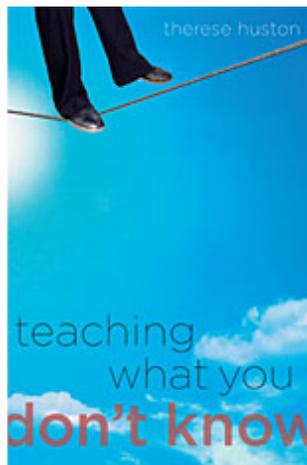
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Therese Huston



## teaching what you **don't know**





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## Seven Habits

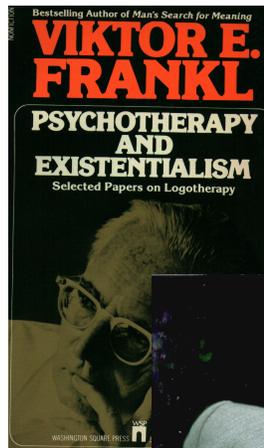
Stephen R. Covey

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## Victor Frankl (1905-1997)



(Portrait 1940)



(Portrait 1994)



## Restoring the character ethic



“People are intrigued when they see good things happening in the lives of individuals, families and organizations . . . And their immediate request is very revealing of their basic paradigm. ‘How do you do it?’ Teach me the techniques” (p. 40, Covey, 1989).



The approach here is “principled centered, character-based, ‘inside-out’ approach” . . . [Which means] “to start first with self, even more fundamentally, to start with the most inside part of your self - with your paradigms, your character and your motives” (pp. 42-43)



Stephen Brookfield



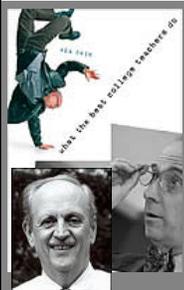
## On technique

- “Only basic goodness gives life to technique” (p. 21, Covey, 1989)
- “. . .[teachers] come to trust their insights and judgements at the same time as they begin to decrease their dependence on decontextualized principles and techniques of good practice” (pp. 12-13, Brookfield, 1990)



## Where technique falls short, humanity emerges

“After three decades of trying to learn my craft, every class comes down to this: my students and I, face to face, engaged in an ancient and exacting exchange called education. **The techniques I have mastered do not disappear, but neither do they suffice.** Face to face with my students, only one resource is at my immediate command: my identity, my selfhood, my sense of this ‘I’ who teaches - without which I have no sense of the ‘Thou’ who learns”  
(p. 10, Palmer, 1998).



Ken Bain



## Not effective technique, but the “humane”

- The magic does not, however, lie in any one of these practices. I cannot stress enough the simple yet powerful notion that **the key to understanding the best teaching can be found not in particular practices or rules** but in the **attitudes** of the teachers, in their **faith** in their students' abilities to achieve, in their **willingness** to take their students seriously and to let them assume control of their own education, and in their **commitment** to let all policies and practices flow from central learning objectives and from a mutual respect and agreement between students and teachers (pp. 78-79, Bain)

## How do you do it? Beyond technique



- "Who is the self that teaches? . . . is the most fundamental question we can ask about teaching and those who teach—for the sake of learning and those who learn" (p. 7; Palmer, 1998).
- Moving from self-mastery/identity & integrity through to interdependence
- Maturity continuum
- Habits



## 7 habits

- Be Proactive
- Begin with the End in Mind
- Put First Things First
- Think Win/Win
- Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood
- Synergize
- Sharpen the Saw



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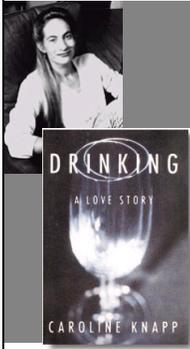
## 1. Be Proactive

- Agency
- Not reactive
  - Too much to cover
  - Students ill prepared or not interested
  - Not enough time
  - Teaching not rewarded
- Work within Circle of Influence



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## Agency

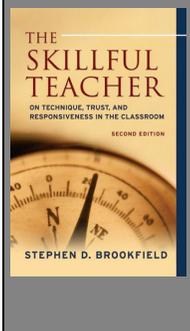


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“So five years after my last drink, I feel a little stronger, a little clearer and very sobered. Life is hard, growth is painful, joy can be elusive. The very best thing I can say about sobriety - the most promising and also the most daunting - is that it gives you choices: You can face fears or run away from them; keep slogging through the mire of human relations or steer clear of risk entirely; spend the next 10 years alone in the house watching *ER* or figure out why the world is so scary. **This is what hit me in the midst of that bleak depression last spring: I'd walk the dog at a local reservoir every afternoon and I'd stare at the ground in front of me and I'd struggle with my own sense of agency.**”

Caroline Knapp (author of *Drinking: A Love Story*) “Sober SECOND Thoughts: Confessions of a reformed drinker,” *Ottawa Citizen*, March 14, 1999, p. C8

## Agency, risk-taking and teaching



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- “Failure is endemic to courageous, risk-taking teaching.” p. 9
- “It is when you stop hurting that you need to worry” p. 10

(from Brookfield, S.D. (1990). *The Skillful Teacher: On technique, trust and responsiveness in the classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.)

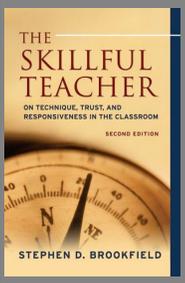
**2. Begin with the End in Mind**

- “all things are created twice”
- essence precedes existence
- intention (mental representation) then action
- central role of mission statement
- learning objectives



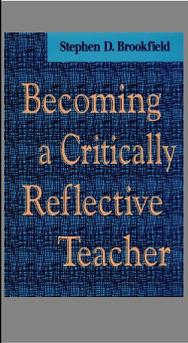
**Begin with the end in mind**

“Teaching is about making some kind of dent in the world so that the world is different than it was before you practiced your craft” (p. 18).



Brookfield, S.D. (1990). *The Skillful Teacher: On technique, trust and responsiveness in the classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.





Stephen D. Brookfield  
Becoming  
a Critically  
Reflective  
Teacher

## Begin with the end in mind

“We teach to change the world.”

Brookfield, S.D. (1995). “What it means to be a critically reflective teacher” in S.D. Brookfield., *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1-27.



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## Beginning with the end in mind

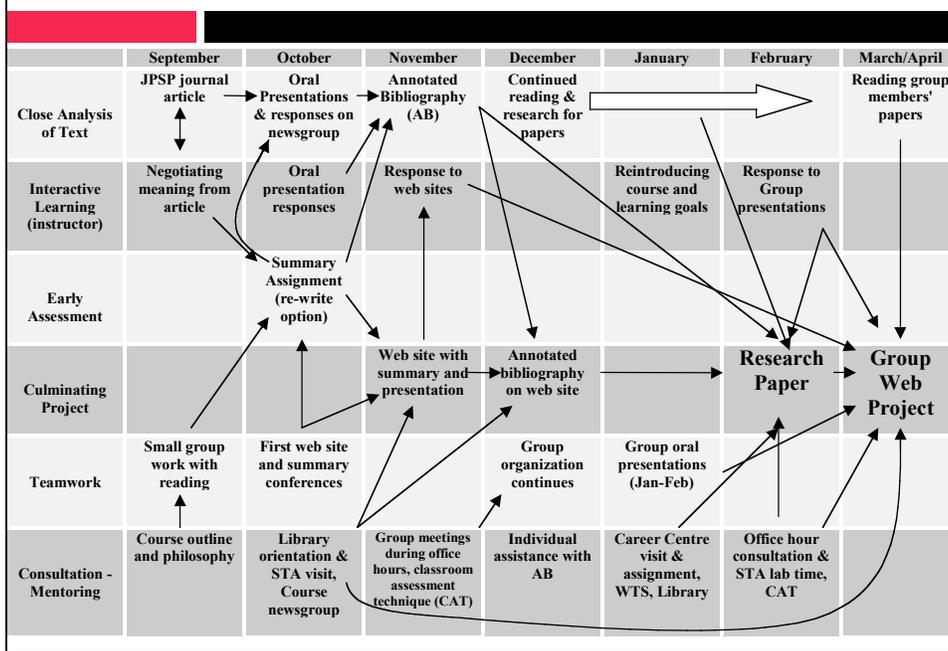
- “Having a clear sense of where the journey is leading and a deeply held belief in the importance of embarking on it are attributes that come powerfully into play when students feel lost, afraid and confused along the way” (p. 20).
- “. . . you must be able to communicate to your students the values, beliefs, and purposes comprising your rationale” (p. 23).



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It’s largely an issue of vision and leadership!

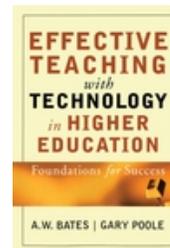
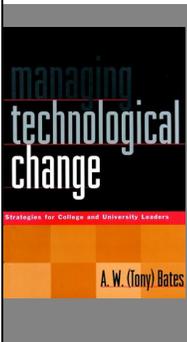
## Vision in Curricular planning



## Leadership

“Unfortunately, the widespread use of new technologies in an organization does constitute a major cultural change. Furthermore, for such change to be successful, leadership of the highest quality is required” (p. 42).

Bates, A.W. (2000). *Managing Technological Change: Strategies for College and University Leaders*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.



## PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING

Covey writes, “How many really buy into it and use it as your frame of reference for making decisions? Without involvement there is no commitment. Mark it down, asterisk it, circle it, underline it. **NO INVOLVEMENT, NO COMMITMENT**” (p. 143).

What is your “vision of the possible?”



Psychology Today

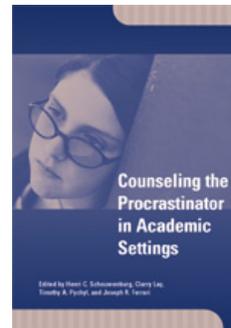
blogs

### 3. Put First Things First

- Exercise of independent will
- It's the “just doing it”
- It may be about procrastination
- It's certainly about priorities



Procrastination



[www.procrastination.ca](http://www.procrastination.ca)

## An act of will?



## Put First Things First

- Exercise of independent will
- It's the "just doing it"
- It may be about procrastination
- It's certainly about priorities

## Effective Management

- “. . . our ability to make and keep commitments to ourselves, to ‘walk our talk’” (p. 148)
- “Management is discipline, carrying it out.”
  - lab meetings
  - office hours, email, newsgroups
  - marking



## Put First Things First

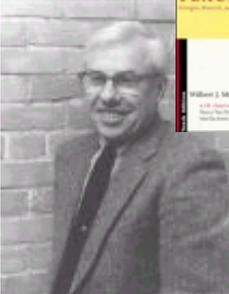
- Exercise of independent will
- It's the “just doing it”
- It may be about procrastination
- It's certainly about priorities





## Planning and Priorities

- Planning Your Course
- The First Day of Class
- 101 Things You Can Do
- Learning Student Names
- Teaching Aids

Wilbert McKeachie

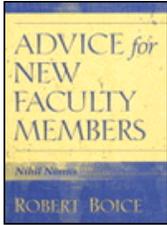


## Strategies for doing

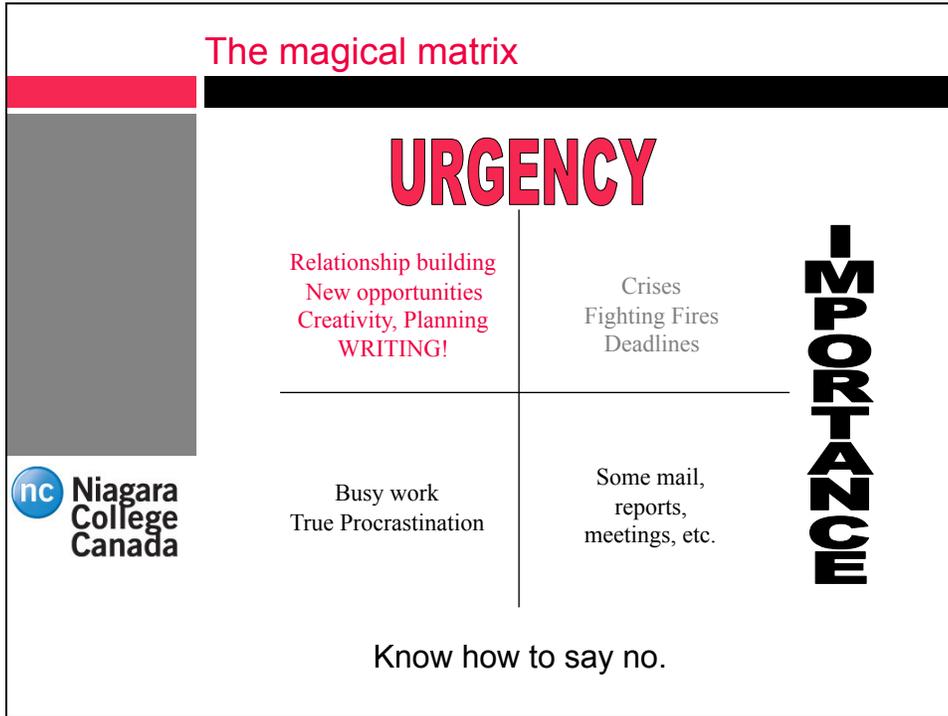


Robert Boice

1. Moderate classroom incivilities with prosocial immediacies
2. Wait
3. Begin before feeling ready
4. Work and teach in brief, regular sessions
5. Stop
6. Moderate over-attachment to content and over-reaction to criticism
7. Moderate negative thinking and strong emotions
8. Let others do some of the work
9. Welcome learning and change
10. Build resilience by limiting wasted efforts



## The magical matrix



## Where are we?

- Be Proactive
- Begin with the End in Mind
- Put First Things First

} Integrity & Self

Next moving towards interdependence, and then,

- Win/Win

## Interdependence

### Emotional Bank Accounts

- Understanding the individual
- Attending to the little things
- Keeping commitments
- Clarifying expectations
- Showing Personal Integrity
- Apologizing sincerely for “withdrawals”



## 4. Think Win/Win

- Scarcity vs. abundance mentality
- Win/Win transforms the individuals involved



Learning – “the great thing between us”

## Process to Win/Win

“Put learning in the middle.”

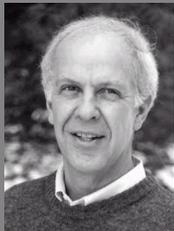
Make explicit:

- Desired results
- Guidelines
- Resources
- Accountability
- Consequences



At one level, it looks like technique, but even here Covey argues that it is not. “Win/Win is not a personality technique . . . It comes from a character of integrity, maturity, and the Abundance mentality. It grows out of high-trust relationships.” (p. 233)

## Zero-sum



Parker Palmer



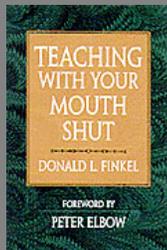
“At its best, the community of truth advances our knowledge through conflict, not competition. Competition is a secretive, zero-sum game played by individuals for private gain; conflict is open and sometimes raucous but always communal, a public encounter in which it is possible for **everyone to win** by learning and growing” (p. 103; Palmer, 1998, emphasis added).

## Process to Win/Win

- “If trust ... is high, what is your [teaching] method? Get out of their way. As long as you have an upfront Win/Win agreement and they know exactly what is expected, your role is to be a source of help and to receive their accountability reports” (pp. 223-224)



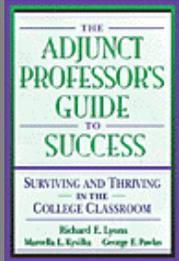
## 5. Seek First to Understand



- Central role of listening
  - mimic content, rephrase content, reflect content and feeling
- “Empathic listening is also very risky. It takes a great deal of security to go into a deep listening experience because you open yourself up to be influenced . . . You become vulnerable” (p. 243)



“The fact is, I would not be able to care very long if I thought it was up to me to make a wise comment about everything people tell me, or to fix them. . . We don't need fixing, most of us, as much as we need a warm space and a good cow” (O'Reilly, 1998; pp. 28-29).



## Vulnerability

- One of the greatest rewards of teaching is allowing yourself to be sufficiently vulnerable that you empower students to share more of themselves with you and their peers than might at times be comfortable.

*The Adjunct Professor's Guide to Success: Surviving and Thriving in the College Classroom*, Chapter 4 - Today's Undergraduate Students, pp. 41-42. By Richard E. Lyons, Marcella L. Kysilka, and George E. Pawlas, Allyn & Bacon, A Viacom Company, Needham Heights, MA. Copyright ©1999 Allyn & Bacon



Mary Rose O'Reilley

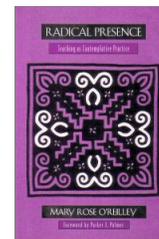


## To teach is to create a space

“These are revolutionary words, because most of us think in terms of filling a space: filling the number of minutes between the beginning and end of class, filling the student’s notebook, filling the student’s head. . . What if we did the opposite? Instead of feeding, we were to honor the hunger with which our students come to school? . . . How can we make a space . . . in our classroom? Mindfulness helps . . .

Simply **being there**, with a very precise focused attention, listening, watching. Not being somewhere else, answering some question that hasn’t been asked.” (O’Reilley, 1998, pp. 1-3)

“Listen like a cow.”



**Where are we?**

- Be Proactive
- Begin with the End in Mind
- Put First Things First
- Think Win/Win
- Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood
- Synergize ← (we're almost done!)
- Sharpen the Saw



**Value differences! - the whole is greater than the sum . . .**



Faith that a solution is there.

## Creativity and synergy

“The creative process is also the most terrifying part because you don’t know exactly what’s going to happen or where it is going to lead. You don’t know what new dangers and challenges you’ll find. It takes an enormous amount of internal security to begin with the spirit of adventure, the spirit of discovery, the spirit of creativity. Without doubt, you have to leave the comfort zone of base camp and confront an entirely new and unknown wilderness. You become a trailblazer, a pathfinder. You open new possibilities, new territories, new continents, so that others can follow” (p. 263).

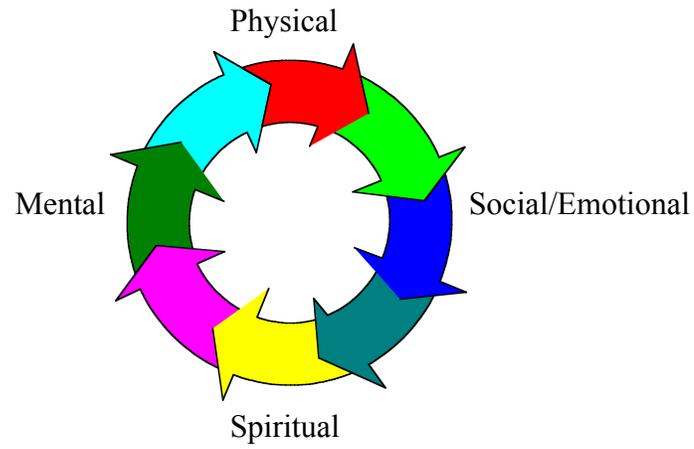


## Synergize



“ we must talk to each other about our inner lives -- risky stuff ...”  
p. 12  
“...mutual illumination that often occurs when we are willing to explore our inner dynamics with each other” p. 23

## 7. Sharpen Your Saw



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## 3M Fellows at Strawberry Creek



## Concluding Remarks

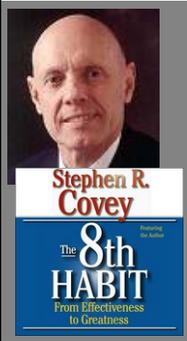
“So if you want to be really effective in the habit of interpersonal communication, you cannot do it with technique alone. You have to build the skills of empathic listening on a base of character that inspires openness and trust. And you have to build the Emotional Bank Accounts that create a commerce between hearts” (p. 239; Covey, 1989).



## Concluding Remarks

- "There are no formulas for good teaching, and the advice of experts has but marginal utility. If we want to grow in our practice, we have two primary places to go: to the inner ground from which good teaching comes and to the community of fellow teachers from whom we can learn more about ourselves and our craft" (p. 141; Palmer, 1998).

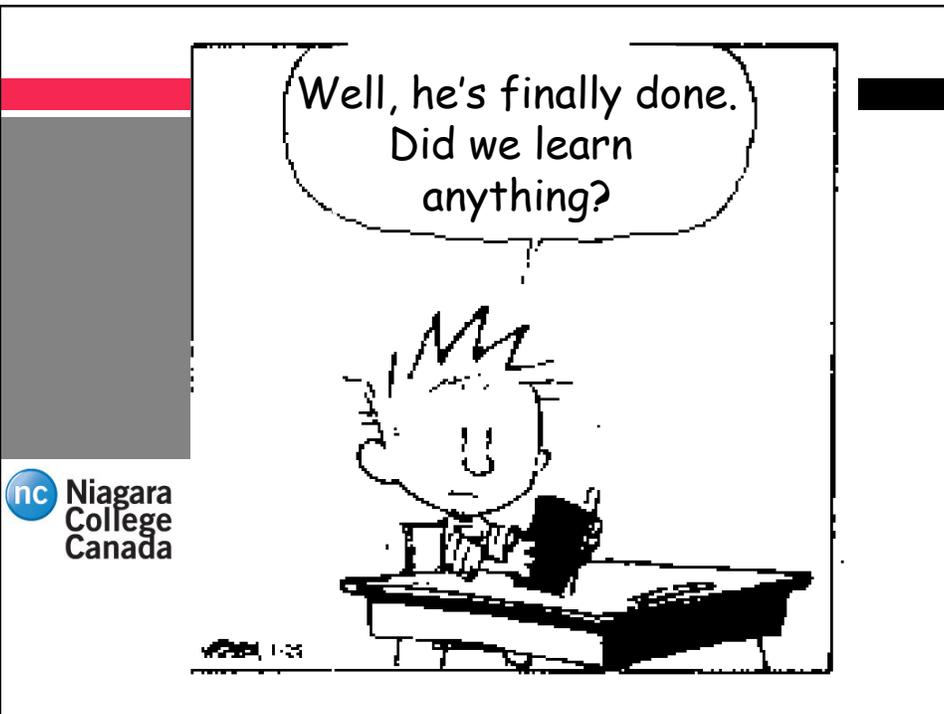




## The 8th Habit

Find your voice  
and inspire others to  
find theirs.

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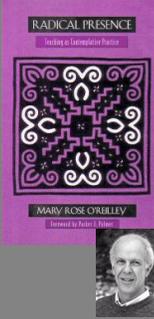




## 7 habits

- Be Proactive
- Begin with the End in Mind
- Put First Things First
- Think Win/Win
- Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood
- Synergize
- Sharpen the Saw







## Tips, tricks and techniques

... **are not at the heart of education - fire is.** I mean finding light in the darkness, staying warm in the cold world, avoiding being burned if you can, and knowing what brings healing if you cannot. That is the knowledge that our students really want, and that is the knowledge we owe them. Not merely the facts, not merely the theories, but **a deep knowing of what it means to kindle the gift of life in ourselves, in others, and in the world** (Palmer, p. x; Foreword to O'Reilly, 1998; emphasis added).



*William Yeats*

“Education is not the filling of a pail  
but the lighting of a fire”

*William Butler Yeats (Poet, 1865-1939)*



## Seven Habits of Effective Teachers

Reflections on nourishing the self  
who teaches



*Timothy A. Pychyl*  
Department of Psychology

