



Whether We Intend To Or Not

February 8, 2021

During my reflection time this week, I came across the passage below that speaks directly to each one of us as educators and our potential impact on our students. The passage was originally shared in 1882 by Haines and Yaggy in their book, *The Royal Path of Life*, about how each of us makes a difference – whether we intend to or not.

“Every man is a missionary, now and forever, for good or for evil, whether he intends it or not. He may be a blot radiating his dark influence outward to the very circumference of society, or he may be a blessing, spreading benedictions over the length and breadth of this world; but a blank he cannot be. The seeds sown in life spring up in harvests of blessings or harvest of sorrow. Whether our influence be great or small, whether it be for good or evil, it lasts; it lives somewhere, within some limit, and is operative wherever it is. We live and we die; but the good or evil we do lives after us, and is not buried with our bones.”

This passage is as true today for all educators as it was when originally shared in 1882.

It is amazing to me that at the age of 51, I can remember things Mr. Hatch said to me in kindergarten.

I remember Mrs. Gary in the third grade and her encouraging words.

I remember Mrs. Green ridiculing my dreams in the seventh grade without taking the time to understand, and I remember how my eighth-grade English teacher communicated her low expectations to me.

I remember little was expected of me, and I remember how Mrs. Cauley would not accept anything less than my best.

I remember in college, the professor who complimented my writing and the professor who saw in me way more than I saw in myself.

It is amazing to me that in the 46 years since I started school, I have not forgotten these things. I wonder if the educators who have impacted me so tremendously even remember the short exchanges that changed the trajectory of my life.

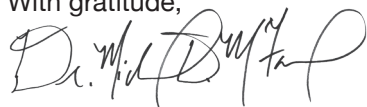
I also wonder about the good and the harm I may have inadvertently done to students I have served over the last 28 years. This passage above reminded me, and I hope it reminds you, that we will make a significant difference in the lives of those we work with and those we serve with the things we say and do – whether we realize it or not.

I challenge you to hold onto this fact as we move through this uncertain time. Know that your words of hope and positivity, your actions to uplift and to accentuate the positive are needed now more than ever. I challenge you to embrace your opportunity as a missionary for good.

People need to be uplifted and encouraged. Your colleagues need it, your students need it and our community needs it. We each have been blessed with the title of educator which, in essence, ensures that **we will make a significant difference in others – whether we intend to or not.**

As Haines and Yaggy said in 1882, we are all missionaries and our lives will have an impact on others. It is imperative we are cognizant of the fact that what we do and say matters. And, in many cases, it makes the difference. And it may be remembered for the next 46 years or so – whether we intend it to or not.

With gratitude,



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