

Teach Me!

By Shawna Schuh, CSP



I recently reconnected with a woman I knew a long time ago. She taught me many valuable lessons when I was first starting out in the business world. She was my mentor, supervisor, slave driver and friend during some of the most difficult times in my professional life.

Being the “new kid” at work was horrible for me and we worked for a boss who liked to pit his employees against each other in order to keep things competitive and also to try and control their happiness, or lack thereof. To say this man was a tyrant would make him sound good

I could give you so many examples of how this wonderful woman showed me, through her own behavior, how to buck up, move on and get over things that bothered me. She used to call me a puppy and she treated me with all the consistency, love and correction a puppy deserves.

The reason I’m writing about her now is because we spoke on the phone yesterday. I don’t know if it’s just the fear in the world, or the hopelessness that seems to be going around, but I’ve found more and more people reaching out to each other lately. We talked about old times and what’s been happening in our lives; the changes we’ve gone through, lessons we’ve learned, all the while renewing our friendship. It was

nice. I hadn’t had a long talk with her for several years and though I hold her dear in my heart our paths are going in very different directions, and there’s less for us to share.

In the course of the conversation I asked her if she had read a certain book I’d recently finished that really helped me, and her response was, “Teach me.”

I proceeded to explain the book concept and why I thought it would benefit her and I gave her the name of the book and author. She listened, which is her habit, and then thanked me.

She proceeded to tell me about a student of hers who had recently taught her a very valuable lesson and that it was the first time in a long time that she had been the student. She shared with me how uncomfortable it had made her feel but how much clearer it had made her perception. She thanked me for being such a good student when we were together. I thanked her for being one of the best teachers I’d ever had and told her I had learned something recently as well. Her response, of course, was, “Teach me.”

When we got off the phone I felt refreshed and energized and I was so happy we had connected again. I thought about her and our conversation the rest of the day and into the evening and then something dawned on me just before I went to bed.

This woman who had taught me so much, and who is still a teacher is not only teachable herself, but she craves learning. When was the last time I asked someone with something interesting to say, “Teach me?” When was the last time I even wanted to be taught? It’s been quite awhile.

As we grow older we know more because we’ve experienced more. This is good; it keeps us on course and helps us make better decisions. Wouldn’t it be great, though, if we started to ask each other one simple thing – ‘teach me’? The connections we have with each other would grow stronger, we’d all learn and give more, and maybe, we’d learn how

to deal with whatever it is we have problems with.

So, here’s my challenge to you. When someone tells you about something they’ve heard or read, say, “Teach me.”

When a child shares a lesson from school say, “Teach me.” When there’s a new software program, say, “Teach me.” And, this is a hard one I know, when your spouse starts in on a theory you don’t agree with say, “Teach me.” This will not only help you understand their point of view, but it will help your marriage and surprise your spouse!

When a coworker has an idea, instead of saying, “We’ve already tried that,” say, “Teach me,” and they might figure out the flaws while you get a new perspective!

When someone serves you a new food rather than deciding you don’t like the look of it say instead, “Teach me.” You may find out that although you don’t want to eat it, you have at least fed your mind.

This concept is so exciting I’ve decided that “Teach me” is my new mantra. I intend to use it with all my encounters so that I am continually learning (the benefit to me) and I’m also continually allowing others to teach me, share their ideas, and feel important (the benefit to them). What a fantastic process, and all I have to say is, “Teach me!”

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