

Two Perspectives

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One of my favorite stories is about twin brothers. One was an incurable optimist and the other was a pessimist. The parents were worried about the extremes of behavior and attitude and decided to take the boys to see a psychologist. The psychologist observed them and concluded that they could be easily helped.



The psychologist put the pessimist in a room filled with all the toys a boy could want. With so many toys available to him, the psychologist was sure that the pessimist would enjoy himself. Unlike the pessimist, the optimist was placed in a room filled with horse manure. The psychologist hoped to see a change in attitude in the optimist because of the depressing environment in which he was placed.

The psychologist and the parents observed both boys through one-way mirrors. The pessimist continued to be a pessimist. He complained that the toys were meaningless for he had no one to play with. They went to look in on the optimist, and were astounded to find him digging through the manure. The psychologist asked the boy what on earth he was doing. The optimist replied that with all that manure, he was sure there had to be a pony in the room somewhere.

It is all a matter of perspective. How you view the world and the circumstances in which you find yourself will determine the quality of your life, and the quality of your service to others. The pessimist tends to expect the worst and sees the worst in all things; the optimist, on the other hand, tends to expect the best and sees the best in all things. The pessimist lives in doubts and fear, and takes no risks; the optimist lives in hope and shows confidence taking necessary risks.

If you are going through a difficult period in your life, you can choose to feel sorry for yourself and complain about how unfair life is, or you can choose to evaluate your situation and take some realistic action to turn things around. I believe that despite the hardships I may face, life is full of hope. It is left to us to identify opportunities even in the worst of times and put them to good use.

The classroom offers us many opportunities to sow good seeds of learning and encouragement for students who are struggling to make the grade. Those from impoverished backgrounds where parental support is lacking come to school with little or no motivation to learn. They need special help from the classroom teacher to get them through school. But the quality of help they get depends on how the teacher views her role and the state in which she finds herself.

The teacher must be an eternal optimist to generate support and hope to students who have no motivation to learn or who are disadvantaged due to a learning disability. Such students require special attention so it is particularly important for that teacher be an optimist rather than a pessimist. Being optimistic does not mean being unrealistic. Rather, it means that you see possibilities where none are apparent and openings for success despite all indications of failure.

We are living in challenging times and the classroom teacher is called upon to play an even more important role in educating students. The teacher must view her profession as a ministry of

healing and restoration and not simply as one of educating for there are many broken students who come to the classroom to be restored. The task is ours to educate, heal and restore children for service now and in the kingdom of God.