

So, You Want to Be a Better Teacher

Better than what? Better than Sally down the hall? Better than the principal thinks you are? Better than you are now? That last choice is easy to accomplish, so I hope it's what you mean.

The principles of quality apply to teaching as much as they do to anything else. To make something better is to improve its quality. To become a better teacher is to improve your quality as a teacher. Applying the principles of quality results in improved quality. It is as simple as that.

Before the mechanics of teaching, before the actions, comes the attitude. The quality attitude. This is the First Major Principle of quality: Quality is an Attitude. Wanting to be a better teacher is certainly part of that attitude. But wanting something to be better doesn't make it better, so there is more to this principle. After all, a principle isn't much of a principle if it doesn't lead to results.

The actual principle is deeper than desire, even deeper than determination. The quality attitude is very simple, but uncompromising. It is that better is a good direction to go in. It is that staying the same or getting worse are not good directions to go in. Better is where you want to go. Not better is not where you want to go.

If that sounds too simple, take a look around. Many people don't have this attitude. They are staying the same, or getting worse. And they don't seem to mind. At least, not enough to do anything about it. They don't have a quality attitude.

Better is a good direction to go in. This one principle, all by itself, will empower a person. It will give a person strength in the face of obstacles or opposition. It will be a rock to build on. If you can agree with this one principle, really agree, and use it, you will be a better teacher. As I said above, it is not enough to want to be a better teacher. It is necessary to know that being a better teacher is a good direction to go in.

This is only the First of the three Major Principles of Quality, but try it on for size. The next time you have to decide whether to do something the same way or a better way, see if it helps. Like a lesson plan. The way you have been doing lesson plans is comfortable and familiar. Ask yourself if there is a better way. Don't expect an answer, by the way. Just ask the question. That's a quality attitude. The answers come from the rest of the principles of quality, and various quality actions. But they all mean nothing without this first Major Principle.

A lot of people don't like things to get better, for too many reasons to count. Having a quality attitude will bring you into contact with these people. That is why it is so important to have the First Major Principle firmly in place. They will knock down your house if it is not built on solid rock. You want to be a better teacher? Go for it. Some people will help. Many will admire what you are doing. But others won't. And that is the second major principle of quality: Quality Leads to Opposition. Be ready for it.

By the way, these principles of quality are just that: principles. They apply to any activity, in any area of life. There are more, which you can learn and use. And bit by bit, you can improve in any area you want.

You want to be a better teacher? You have already started, just by reading this article. The only way to fail is to stop moving in that direction.

About the Author

Don Dewsnap has spent years studying quality and its principles and applications. Now he has put his knowledge into a readable, useable book: *Anyone Can Improve His or Her Life: The Principles of Quality*. Read an excerpt or buy this book in paperback or as an e-book at Principles-of-Quality.com or as a paperback at any online bookseller.

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