

The below extract is taken from book “Imagine No Child Left Invisible” by Dr, Shelja Sen

Respect

Children might forget the subjects they were taught by you, but they will never forget how you made them feel about themselves.

Every kid has an inbuilt sense of dignity, a quality of being worthy of honour or respect. We do not give it to them, it is there, deep down in each one waiting to be acknowledged. The problem is that somewhere we start equating that respect to whether they deserve it or not. Remember the acronym I had used earlier – DISGRACEFULL – disability, intelligence, sexual orientation, gender, race, age, culture, ethnicity, finances, useful contacts, looks and language that decides where we are placed in the food chain and how much respect we deserve. The Power Pyramid is at its vicious best in the high school.

Suppose, we respected every child or adolescent irrespective of his or her ability, gender, background, behaviour, scores, looks or skills. This is a core philosophy of narrative practice. As I had highlighted in the You Me We approach in Chapter 3. Young people can be made to take accountability without robbing them of their dignity. They can be responsible if we respect them and give them a chance. We are so busy ‘telling’ them what to do, what not to do, what is right and what is wrong that it is no surprise that they end up doing the opposite. At times, they might even rage at you, challenging you in front of the class. Take a deep breath and let it go. Do not take it personally. Remember :

The problem is the problem. The person is not the problem.

Tune in

What I find most fascinating about adolescents is how different their world view is from ours. The problem with us is that we think they are wrong and we are right. Of course, they think the same about us but that is essential milestone they have to go through.

"When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years.

– Mark Twain"

Suppose, rather than trying to correct them at every opportunity, we started being curious about their world and their way of thinking. If we could listen to them, not from our ears but our hearts: to tune into their world we must let go of our programming and diktats. Be ready to surprised by the intensity and passion in their voices. You might say that you do not have time for this in your

busy schedule but try it once in a while, you will be amazed at what they will share with you. You might also ask, what is the point of it all as your job is to teach and not to find out their world view. The fact is that adolescents are keen to learn from teachers whom they admire and who understand them. Also, do remember that the most important life lessons you or they might learn in these discussions might have nothing to do with academics!

Dear students,

Kindly answer the below questions which refer to passage we had discussed in the class today.

Feel free to write your own imagination and the meaning you made from the passage.

1. What the children can and cannot forget?
2. As per the Author what is “*sense of dignity*” of a child?
3. What acronym has the author used and where is it useful?
4. The author says “*As I had highlighted in the You Me We approach in Chapter 3*”. What do you think would have been the core concept of Chapter 3?
5. What were the observations of Mark Twain? What does it reveal about the adolescents?
6. Who as per the Author is the problem, and what is not a problem?
7. What ways does the author suggest to deal with the adolescents?
8. Do you agree with them? Give your views.
9. Suggest a suitable title for the above extract with your reasons.