

## On “Teaching”

One often hears the term “teaching” or “teacher,” but what does it mean really? The usual images that come to mind are someone getting chalk on their coat in front of a group of people or of a one-on-one how-to or person-to-person showing how or communicating what.

Another common image is a mentoring relationship, in which a more experienced individual shares in a number of ways with an initiate of one sort or another in what often, through not always, looks like a friendship situation.

These are all very real exemplars of “teaching,” but they don’t exhaust the possibilities, though they often do in most people’s minds. This note is about the universal nature of the teaching phenomenon and process. It is composed of four components: 1) Being, 2) Exemplifying, 3) Transmitting, and 4) Inspiring.

Not all forms and instances of “teaching” occur in every instance of the phenomenon, sometimes regrettably so. But the term means all four of these happenings, and the best of its manifestation does indeed involve all four. What remains to be done here is to spell out a bit of what each of the four components are.

“**Being,**” means transforming expanding others by the way one lives one’s life. That is very difficult to capture in words, but Jesus said it when he said, “Be ye as I.”

“**Exemplifying,**” is a little difficult to distinguish from the first one, “Being.” The difference is that while “Being” is impacting by who you are and how you manifest, “Exemplifying” means that part of your Being is an *example* of what has been learned. In other words, it is a behavioral demonstration that works in life and that leads to modeling reactions.

“**Transmitting,**” is an intentional communication of information, values, commitments, interpretations and priorities. It can be done one-on-one, as in friendship or mentoring, or it is often done in front of groups or via the communication media. It is primarily verbal, but event-utilization, teaching aides and personal nonverbal styles or intentional nonverbal messages is also involved frequently.

“**Inspiration,**” is the most difficult to pull off and it is also often the most important function. “Inspire” means to breathe in spirit, and Inspiration often is spiritual in its intent, nature and impact. It seems to involve a soul reaction, as well as a motivational activation.

So there you have it. “Teaching” is Being, Exemplifying, Transmitting and Inspiring in various combinations, contexts and intentions. It occurs all the time and it makes one aware of the ultimate responsibility one always carries to walk your walk and to Walk The Walk.