
How to Be a Happy Teacher

I would say that I am happy in my job. I complain of course, about the bad bits: Observations, Ofsted, workload, micromanagement, pointless meetings, vilification in the media, erosion of pay and conditions and worrying moves towards deskilling the profession. However, most of the time, I am happy, despite my occasional 'end of my tether' blog. If I wasn't, I would have left for good and never looked back.

I ask myself often: How it is possible? After all, this is a (mainly) thankless, tiring, all consuming existence. I have little time to pursue out of work interests. I am so exhausted that my weekends and evenings are spent sleeping and on Twitter talking about *my job*.

Is this a life? Many would say, no, It's rubbish, and those people are well out of it, but for me and many like me, it is different.

I could have let the detrimental parts of the job get on top of me and bring me down quite easily, there are enough of them, but for some reason I have always made a move from one school to another at the right time. I have never let the paperwork and politics take over.

So what is the secret? How have I managed, and continue to manage to find job satisfaction, when everywhere I go is more of the same?

Well, by doing more or less exactly as I please.

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Yes. I do what I want. I teach *exactly* how I please.

It is rare that anyone can *make* you do things in teaching. People can suggest you teach *this* stuff, in *that* manner, but unless you have a competency issue or are in one of *those* schools, times when someone really dictates what you do in class are rare. Even at this time of year, with SATs looming, my revision classes differ from my year group colleagues'. People are far too busy in teaching with their own never ending list of chores to come in and tell you

what to do. Besides this, we are meant to be a *reflective* profession, no one *wants* you to do exactly what you are told. Where's the reflection in that?

Once you have demonstrated that you have good behaviour management, subject knowledge, a professional manner with parents, staff and towards your students, good managers (in my experience) will leave you to get on with the job they are paying you for. Managers should not *want* to babysit or control us as professionals. Good Heads I have known are only too happy with teachers who display initiative and drive in an environment which is stifling self reliance and conviction out of the profession.

Teaching is not a job where between 9 and 5 your life is dictated by a list of pre-defined tasks to be completed in a prescribed manner. It is different, especially the primary variety; It is huge: Children have to learn to read, write, do maths and science and all those other curriculum areas of course, but our job is much bigger than that. Our job is so vast that no book has been written that will tell you how to do it; it is so complex that every teacher fails every day.

Teaching is fundamentally relational, and the relationships we build need to be strong enough to give children a platform and a safety net. Teachers have to help children to follow rules and yet be themselves. They instil confidence and encourage individuals to pursue their talents. Teachers support while children learn to cope with challenge, change and difference in life.

How we set children off on their learning journeys is very much down to teachers as *individuals*.

Who *we* are, how we inspire, nurture and guide children is instrumental in our practice. Our personalities are key in our job, so if you find your personality is a 'fit' with being a teacher, then *being yourself* is what you are paid for.

It is important to remember this, because if you are being paid for essentially being yourself, then you will be happy.

And children deserve teachers who are happy.

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