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## Teaching the Art of Reaching

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## Teaching the Art of Reaching

Some say, “those who can’t do, teach.” Others may argue that true teaching can only come from deeply experiencing what one is trying to teach. Teaching is also not simply the lesson the teacher is trying to teach but the way in which they teach it. It’s about whether it “clicks” for the student and if you can break it down into their language. This is where the virtues of patience and compassion meet the ability to pivot. It’s something simple in practice, but the execution is critical. It’s a daily commitment, sometimes, even by the minute, to remain steadfast with the resolve to reach. My mother always says you can only help people the way they want to be helped, and I believe a similar approach could be applied to teaching. Everyone learns differently, and you must meet individuals in the different place that they may be. It’s an art to understand the needs of every student and be flexible in accommodating them. I often think it’s a mix of reading your student, recognizing their limitations, and encouraging their strengths.

While I’ve always loved to teach, my role as a female wrestling coach has forced me to rethink the way I see teaching. I had to learn patience with a process that I can’t control. I had to learn how to guide and lead with a tone that encourages people to want to take the action steps required to make the progress I’m describing to them. One girl needed me to show the technique on her personally so she could feel it because she’s a kinesthetic learner. Another wrestler needed me to watch her do multiple repetitions before she truly felt she could confidently replicate the result in a tournament. Regardless of their learning style, they all needed me in their corner coaching my heart out for them. They needed me to believe in them until they could learn to believe in themselves. True teaching is a gift. It’s the ability to touch another soul and help shape their path as they move towards something bigger than themselves. You must inspire them to try their best because giving everything means you’ve become vulnerable to the pain failure could bring. Everyone needs a safe space to fall innumerable times before they can get back up and thrive. While this kind of mentorship requires giving so much more of yourself than one might expect, it will forever be worth it for me. I’ll never forget the tears in their eyes as they thanked me for never giving up on them and loving them through their individual journeys.

**AUTHOR: VEENAH FRANCIS**

- ▶ Veenah Francis is a third-year medical student at KPCOM who has always enjoyed mentoring and coaching.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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