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What Are Teachers For?

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Editorial Comment

WHAT ARE TEACHERS FOR?

Carl Rogers, an outstanding psychologist and teacher, has said,

“I am only interested in learnings which significantly influence behavior.

I have come to feel that the only learning which significantly influences behavior is self-discovered, self-appropriated learning.

Such self-discovered learning, truth that has been personally appropriated and assimilated in experience, cannot be directly communicated to another.”

Dr. Rogers in attempting to get the attention of his readers has made three strong statements related to teaching. Let us ask, what are teachers for? We can then attempt to answer the query.

Students in the classes of a nationally known leader in science report that he stimulates his listeners, informs those who inquire, and guides the activity of those who seek his aid. There are three transitive verbs in this sentence, and each is wholly significant. They are *stimulate*, *inform* and *guide*.

Good teachers stimulate and quicken their students by words and deeds. They incite them to action. They accentuate their successes and mitigate their errors. Students identify themselves with these teachers and unconsciously copy not only their ideas but their personal mannerisms as well. Some teachers cannot be ignored. Eminent teachers set forth provocative questions to which students demand pertinent answers.

Good teachers *then* inform their inquiring students by imparting relevant facts and variant points of view. These teachers have new ideas and new materials which they themselves have created. Indocination and exhortation are not part of their instruction. Neither do they proclaim, “I am Sir Oracle, and when I ope my lips let no dog bark!”

Good teachers guide their students and assure them of success. They have done and can do what they want their students to accomplish. Pupils in their classes become students, and students become disciples. Mastery and creative scholarship are their goals. Good teachers are productive and are builders of ideas. Their guidance and counsel are sought in the community, state and nation. They have much to offer, for their stimulation, information and guidance modify significantly human behavior.

Homer L. J. Carter
Editor