

Want a healthy, happy life? Become a teacher.

By Dr. Mary Man Yee Poon



If I say “Want a healthy, happy life? Become a teacher”, I will then wonder what your reactions are to this as a teacher. I’m sure some teachers will agree to this as for the great hours and holidays and some will most likely disagree and even say “this is non-sense”. Contradictory results have been proven by many researchers. Many research claims that teachers have the highest levels of overall well-being. While others claim that teaching is a super stressful job. Before we go any further in details, let’s define the word “teacher”. According to the New World Dictionary, “teacher” means a person who teaches, esp. as a profession; instructor. In that case, let’s define “teaching”, one of the definitions is to provide with knowledge, insight, etc; cause to know, understand. So a teacher is someone who provides knowledge, insight to the students. I believe you will feel stressful just by looking at these definitions. It sounds like a huge responsibility. Somehow, you are responsible for what the students will become. Even though being a teacher sounds

stressful, it is most important to be positive, if you have chosen this as your career.

One might ask “Why is it so stressful being a teacher?” It’s stressful because you have to prepare for the classes. You have to make sure that you are teaching the latest information, you have to make sure that you know the subject well. You want to make sure that you know how to answer most of the questions that are being asked by your students. It’s stressful because you have to deal with students with different personalities. It’s difficult to deal with so many students and each comes from a different upbringing. Some of them come with heavy family issues, some of them come with genetic difficulties and some of them just don’t want to cooperate with you. Let’s say with a class of 25 students, with just two students acting out, the teacher will have a handful to deal with. It’s stressful because the teachers need to deal with the parents or caretakers of the

students. Nowadays most of the parents/caretakers would like the teachers to correct or to “fix” their children. They expect the teachers to change the behaviors of the students. For example if the student is not getting good grades, parents expect the teachers to do something about it, so that the student will get good grades. But we are not magician! What can we do???

It's stressful because we have to deal with so many coworkers and especially the principal. Not only do teachers have to deal with so many students, they also need to deal with so many colleagues. They also need to deal with the principal, who usually expect quite a bit from the teachers. I am sure we can go on and on with this stressful list. I think I have made my point and you certainly will agree with most of the things that I have mentioned.

Well, if being a teacher is such a stressful job, why do you still want to be a part of this profession? Tell me, what's good about this profession? I am sure the “Good List” will be much shorter than the “Bad List”, but does this really make this profession less attractive? Let's take a look!

For one thing, while preparing for your teachings, you are at the same time learning the new materials. So you are also gaining new knowledge and insight. Next, while you are dealing with the different personalities of the students, you

are improving your emotional intelligence at the same time. Emotional intelligence is always helpful for us, no matter we are dealing with students, colleagues or family members, we will benefit from this. One of the most important things that you receive for being a teacher is satisfaction. No word can be used to describe the satisfaction one gets when you know some of the students are gaining the knowledge. I agree this satisfaction does not come very often but we can't minimize it. We also need to remember that teaching is a profession that one might not see the immediate effect until later in life. For example, your students may not comprehend what you have to say right this moment, but may be down the road, he or she will recall what you have taught many years ago and how this would of affected them. All I am saying is that teaching is a profession which requires one's heart and soul and don't expect to see an immediate effect in return. Be patient, one day you and your student will both realized how good of a job you both have done.

A teacher is like a candle, it consumes itself to light the way for others. You will feel drain and tired most of the time, but, you somehow will transform that energy onto someone who needs it the most. 🕯️
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