

Author conversations

On the importance of educators

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I came up with this task for myself last year. And I did a letter-writing campaign for the unsung heroes in my life. So these were people that — I felt like my parents and my spouse, they know how I feel, but I wanted to write letters to people who might not have known how they impacted me. And then I looked back over the 30 letters I wrote, and at least 10 or 15 of them were educators in my life. And I felt like for me, when I was thinking about this question, like that's who I want to be for someone. And those are what those emails do for us. It's like, you get to be that person who nudges that student on the next step on their journey. And you may not know that for 20 years, but I'm hoping, someday I'll get that letter back maybe.

My most rewarding kind of moments are these really quiet moments. I'm on my own, and I'm reading student feedback about the product. So, a couple semesters ago, I actually traded out one of our chapters for what I usually use in my own class. So they took one chapter of our material and used our current textbook instead of their normal one in my class. And then I had students give me feedback online. So I'm reading through the feedback, and one student — and I kind of looked up their performance in the rest of the semester — just kind of exploded with this like, 'oh my gosh! Can I please, please have this for the rest of the semester? This is what did it for me. I was able to get the video. It helped me every time. I went back, rewatched it. The quiz questions were amazingly helpful, and when I took the exam' — there were three chapters on the exam — 'this is the one I nailed! Can I please get this for the rest of the semester?'

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