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TODD NESLONEY

"I don't believe in having that treasure chest up front that when somebody does something good they can get a pencil or a sticker, I really want my kids to have the intrinsic motivation to do what's right because it's what's right, not because they're going to get a price from it."

VICKI DAVIS

The Ten-minute Teacher podcast with Vicki Davis. Every week day you'll learn powerful practical ways to be a more remarkable teacher today.

VICKI: Happy Monday Morning Motivation. Dear teachers, we're going to have what a call a hyper phone call with my friend, Todd Nelsoney [www.todddnesloney.com @TechNinjaTodd <https://twitter.com/techninjatodd>], co-author of *Kids Deserve It* <http://amzn.to/2lbWbGB> . Now Todd, imagine, you were a teacher not too long ago and I know you still get in the classroom. You've got a teacher driving in a car, heading to school and they've got that student who they are struggling to reach. What's your advice today?

TODD: Well, you know, we have so many of those kids that we all work with. And every one of us, when you think about that struggling kid you can picture somebody in your head right away whether it's this year or somebody a year before. But for me, it's just that moment of getting in there and starting every single day fresh with that student and taking the time to get to know them, but also allowing them to get to know you.

I think some of these educators, that's the part we forget. We work really hard on getting to know the kids, we don't always let them in to know us too. And when we kind of break down those barriers we show them that we really care about them on a personal level. And that can really break through to a lot of our kids.

VICKI: So what do you think the biggest mistake that most of us teachers make when we're trying to reach that child that we're just struggling to reach? Is it about relationship? What is it?

TODD: Well, it's definitely about the relationship. I think sometimes – and this is just me personally thinking. I think sometimes we let our own emotions get in the way. We care about these kids so deeply that when they hurt us or disappoint us it really gets to us emotionally and that can change the look on our face, tone in our voice.

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And kids, no matter what their age is, they pick up on that really quickly. And so it's just important to – like I said – start everyday fresh, continually give kids new opportunities to start again. One thing that I've really been working on as an

administrator this year is making sure that every single student, when they act out, the first thing you start with is a conversation and just figuring out what's going on, what's happening, what can I help you with, before jumping straight to the consequence, which I typically what we like to do.

VICKI: Yeah, we've really just got to understand. People do things for a reason. If I have a child who, all of a sudden says a word of profanity or just does something completely off the wall, you know, my first question is not jumping on their case, it's like, "Okay, stand back, be the adult, what made them do this?"

TODD: And the same thing is true about the coworkers that we have as well. It's always because something else is going on. One of my favorite quotes has always been, "Hurting people hurt others." (Citation: John Maxwell says "hurting people hurt people." <http://www.johnmaxwell.com/blog/pick-your-battles>) And so having that mindset of knowing that their anger or disappointment of whatever comes from a place of hurt and we really need to take the time to understand and get to know that.

VICKI: Yes, that is so very true. Now, there's something you do that I love and I have adopted over the last few years, I think you're the one I heard about it from. The positive phone call. What is the positive phone?

TODD: So I don't believe in having that treasure chest up front that when somebody does something good they can get a pencil a sticker. I really want my kids to have intrinsic motivation to do what's right because it's what is right, not because they're going to get a price form it.

And so what we've done on our campus, and it's been amazing. We have **Hats Off cards** <http://webbelementary.blogspot.com/2016/11/some-have-no-one-else.html> and every teacher get six a week and they give them out to kids. When kids are doing something exception or when they've seen growth or anything like that. When a kid gets a hats off card they come to the front office and one of us administrators up here will call home just to brag about them. And then after we call home they leave their hats off card up in the front office and on the next day of the announcement they get their name and what they got a hat off card for announced.

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And then on Fridays I draw 20 random Hats Off cards the kids get to spend an extra 45 minutes with me, and we'll go outside and play and we'll go outside and play. Extra recess or come play an organized game. But it's just been really wonderful to celebration and just call home and tell their families how amazing they are. And when we've taking it and implemented it with adults too. And so now we have hats-off cards for teachers where I would call those teacher's parents and tell them how wonderful they are. It's such a great experience to get to do that.

VICKI: And Mr. Nelsoney gets more recess. [laugh]

TODD: Exactly. There we go.

VICKI: Well, I love it because you do play with the kids. And I've seen videos of you in the lunchroom serving lunch, you know, you got certified so you could do that. <http://www.coolcatteacher.com/bring-out-the-best-everybody-school/> And you're just everywhere. Does it wear you out? Are Mondays every tiring for you?

TODD: Well, I mean, every day is tiring. But just like Adam [Welcome <https://twitter.com/awelcome>] and I talked about in *Kids Deserve it*, the book, it's just that we leave everything we have in the car; all of our drama, all of our problems, we leave them in the car before we even come in the building. Because this day may be the only day I get with that kid and I want them to have the best time with me and I don't want my personal issues to get in the way. And so it does take a little training on my part and there's some days I do that better than others. But I definitely try to make myself seen, I try to make sure the kids and the staff know that our roles are roles of servant leaders and so I try to make sure to be a servant as much possible

But it fuels my soul and fuels my spirit to be able to do that for others and that's what keeps me going.

VICKI: Okay. So Todd, pretend like, all of us listening, all your teachers. All give us a Monday morning pep because it's like March and people are like, "Oh, you know, we got testing come up, some people are getting a little grumbly. Give us our pep talk, Mr. Nelsoney."

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TODD: Well, whether it's Monday or any other day, every day is a gigantic opportunity placed in front of you to change someone's life. And I use the work someone because it may not be the kid, it maybe the teacher down the hall. It may be a student's parents. There maybe somebody in the hall office. But one research that I think about often was the research of gratitude <http://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/giving-thanks-can-make-you-happier> and that when you show gratitude to others it increases your mood more than it even increases theirs.

So when you have those days when you're feeling down, when you have those feelings when you have those data when you're feeling motivated or you're bumped out or you're stressed out. Take a moment to make a phone call, write a note, buy someone lunch and just spend time investing in others and you'll see that your mood will increase more than anything else.

VICKI: Wow, you've give us so much Monday motivation. But I have to ask you one quick question, thought. Do you ever get down?

TODD: Every single day. I am definitely my own worst critic and there are moments where I have to close my office door and cry for a couple of minutes. Or I had to go sit in a

kindergarten classroom because those kids will tell you they love you and you're amazing every single day and that's my up-lifter. But yes, every single day I struggle with self-doubt and wondering if I'm doing the right thing or not. But it's when I really work hard to come back to my focus of investing in others and knowing that I've been placed in a position I am for a reason and trusting that God has me here to do work for him.

VICKI: Yes. And, you know, it's just work worth doing. I know the criticism is hard and I mean, goodness, I make mistakes and I deserve it a lot of times – I deserve the criticism. But isn't it such an important job?

TODD: Exactly. There's nothing like it in my opinion because the work that we do is felt for years to come even if we don't do it immediately.

VICKI: Well, teachers, if we don't have enough motivation for this Monday, something is wrong with us.

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I do highly suggest that you take a look for Todd's book, *Kid Deserve it*. And now, Todd is going to explain our giveaway for today.

TODD: So I'm going to be giving away one lucky listener. A *Kids Deserve It* book, bracelets and sticker. And Vicki will explain to you how exactly you can win it

VICKI: Okay. Go on iTunes <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/10mt-10-minute-teacher-show/id1201263130> , please a review and leave your Twitter handle or your Instagram handle. We pretty much give you 48 hours and then we wait 24 hours other. So the iTunes review will show up and we'll announce out woman. So I recommend, go up Ada. So g out there and take a look at the book, *Kids Deserve It*, it' very motivating just like Todd.

Thank you for listening to the Ten-minute Teacher Podcast. You can download the show notes and see the archive at coolcatteacher.com/podcast. Never stop learning.

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