

Thank you.

As a child, I'm not sure that I ever thanked a teacher. I've tried to think back on all of the teachers that I've had over the years and not only are there some that I can not picture; there are none that I can remember giving my heartfelt thank you. In fact, there is only one that, given the chance, I would go back and thank today. She made my life much more difficult.

We often look for ways to make our lives as easy as possible. This makes perfect sense in a world where we are overscheduled, overworked, and underpaid. Our adult days begin at sunrise and the constant demands do not end until well after our children are put to bed and we've planned for tomorrow. Our children often feel the same way. Wake up, get dressed, make your bed, go, go, go through school, afternoon activities, sports, music lessons, math lessons, etc. It is no wonder that we often do just what is necessary to get the job done.

But this is a thank you letter to a person who did not accept what was needed to just get the job done. I met this teacher in college and she changed my life. I would like to say that it was one instance, the one time that she pushed me to do more, that changed me, but it was much more than that. However, until I sat down to write for this month's Digest, I never realize how this one point of critical, constructive feedback had shaped me.

What did she do that had such a profound effect on me? She told me, when I was a junior in college, that I didn't know how to write. She didn't use those exact words. She said it with more tact. The message was the same. You're writing is not up to the University's standard. She then told me what I needed to do to fix it. She didn't fix it for me, she told me what to look for, she gave me examples, and then put me to work to fix it. This went on for some time and the important thing is that she was right and she helped me become better.

I want to extend this thank you to all of the people in my new Douglas family who make my life difficult. Thank you to the students who have questioned the rules at Douglas – why can't we play touch football? Why can't we share food at lunch? You've helped me understand why we have the rules, which rules make sense and which I can't justify. Thank you to the people who have made me think about equity, racism, and bullying. You've helped me clarify my own opinions and think about exactly how, what, and when we all teach our children these life lessons. Thank you to the people who question schedules, routines, placement, or world language programs. Your lack of blind acceptance makes my job much more difficult, but you make the product better. Thank you all, for making my life more difficult, for making me a better person, and making Douglas a better place for all of us. Keep up the good work.

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