

PART ONE

Teachers and their Relationship with Students

In order to succeed in the very difficult task of effectively educating young people, a teacher truly must possess certain qualities.

Patience Anyone who knows young people easily recognizes the necessity of patience, which is the only thing that permits a teacher to rise above the difficulties inherent in educating youth. Patience is most necessary in directing a group of young people from very diverse backgrounds and training. Teachers often need to speak to one student, to answer another student and probably several at the same time, to help others reason out situations when they seem often to have little use for reason, to repeat many times the same thing without seeing any results, to calm those who are too lively, to move forward those who move slowly, to correct those who need correcting, to prepare others to accept

responsibility—and it seems that all of this goes on at the same time. Teachers seem not to have a moment for themselves amid the activity that is constantly going on in a school.

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Without the virtue of patience, teachers would have difficulty enduring the qualities that are so natural to young people: making life difficult for a teacher, refusing to follow directions, upsetting the class, promoting a bad spirit among other students, and ridiculing and making fun of teachers. Some students mock teachers' voices and gestures; some will complain without cause to their parents, who will immediately assume that what they are being told is the truth. The many difficulties that teachers face would dishearten those who have entered teaching with real hopes of accomplishment. But teachers need to remember that they have received a call and resist such trials with all the means given to them through patience. If you know how to build patience, a calmness will come to you and peace will exist around you. Patience is the shield against which all these difficulties are blunted.

Teachers who do not know patience cannot restrain themselves, and they often show their lack of patience in harsh or imprudent words. They often carry on in all sorts of ways, even becoming violent, and in a burst of anger, as ridiculous as scandalous, will lose all control. They will even go as far as to physically abuse their students. Losing self-control lowers them in the eyes of their students. The first cause of all of that is a lack of patience. With a little more energy and self-control, teachers can prevent these excesses. Little by little, time will calm first prejudices, soften reactions, and lead to reasonable conclusions. Right reason always ends by triumphing over all obstacles. It is through patience that “you will possess your soul in peace.”

