

EFA-F 2014 ANNIVERSARY LECTURE

TITLE: BEING A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR

OTHERS:- ROLE MODELLING.

A PAPER PRESENTED

BY

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INTRODUCTION:

Showing example to other is an ability to draw on positive internal strengths when taking action in the world. This is socially referred to as being a role model.

Who is a Role Model?

A role model is someone that is well-respected and admired, a good example for others to follow, someone who another person admires and tries to be like, a person whose behaviour in a particular role is imitated by others, someone that we look up to, a mentor, a person whose behaviour, example, or success can be emulated by others, especially by younger people.

Qualities of Role Models

Five qualities of role models were identified and socially recognised by the societies all over the world. These qualities were woven through hundreds of stories and life experiences that helped individual to form a vision for their own futures. In a poll of 50 adult Facebook readers of this blog, these same qualities were mentioned as adults reflected on their own role models. The biggest difference was that adults did not rank “commitment to community” as high as their younger counterparts. They also mentioned qualities like compassion, fearlessness, and listening skills. By far, the greatest attribute of a role model is an ability to inspire others.

Passion and Ability to Inspire

Role models show passion for their work and have the capacity to infect others with their passion. Speaking of several of his teachers, one student said, “They’re so dedicated to teaching students and helping students and empowering students. That is such a meaningful gesture. They are always trying to give back to the next generation. That really inspires me.”

Clear Set of Values

Role models live their values in the world. Children admire people who act in ways that support their beliefs. It helps them understand how their own values are part of who they are and how they might seek fulfilling roles as adults. For example, students spoke of many people who supported causes from education to poverty to the environment. Role models helped these students understand the underlying values that motivated people to become advocates for social change and innovation.

Commitment to Community

Role models are other-focused as opposed to self-focused. They are usually active in their communities, freely giving of their time and talents to benefit people. Students admired people who served on local boards, reached out to neighbours in need, voted, and were active members of community organizations.

Selflessness and Acceptance of Others

Related to the idea that role models show a commitment to their communities, students also admired people for their selflessness and acceptance of others who were different from them. One student spoke of her father, saying “He never saw social barriers. He saw people’s needs and acted on them, no matter what their background or circumstances. He was never afraid to get his hands dirty. His lifestyle was a type of service. My father taught me to serve.”

Ability to Overcome Obstacles

As Booker T. Washington once said, “Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which one has overcome.” Young people echoed this sentiment, showing how they developed the skills and abilities of initiative when they learned to overcome obstacles. Not surprisingly, they admire people who show them that success is possible. One student shared a story of a young man she met in Cambodia while on a service-learning project with her school. “He is an incredibly hardworking individual who has faced unimaginable obstacles in his life, yet continues to persevere to support his family and encourage his community. He survived the Cambodian genocide. He earned his education in a system where those who succeed are the ones who bribe officials. He has dedicated his life to give back to his community. Wow! What an individual; and the best civic role model!”

Research studies have long shown a correlation between role models and higher levels of civic engagement in young people. Positive role models are also linked to self-efficacy, the ability to believe in ourselves. In fact, the young people in my study admitted that had they not learned to believe in themselves, they would not have been capable of believing they could make a difference in the world!

Children develop as the result of many experiences and relationships. Role models play an important role in inspiring kids to learn, overcome obstacles, and understand that positive values can be lived each day. Whether you are a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, teacher, civic leader, clergy member, sports coach,

after-school program leader, or a person who just happens into a child's life, you have the ability to inspire!

When teens speak, do people listen?

Natalie, age 18, described her role model as a person with "a clear sense of what is important to her, putting forth the effort to improve and create things that will make a difference." When Samira, also 18, feels "lazy, tired, or just plain annoyed," she thinks of her role model and "is motivated to start working again." Natalie and Samira were part of my research study on how young people develop the skills, abilities, and motivation to become engaged citizens. They and 42 other college students recalled stories of their childhoods and adolescence and the kind of people who inspired them.

Role models come into young people's lives in a variety of ways. They are educators, civic leaders, mothers, fathers, clergy, peers, and ordinary people encountered in everyday life. This study showed that being a role model is not constrained to those with fancy titles or personal wealth. In fact, students were quick to state that "a true role model is not the person with the best job title, the most responsibility, or the greatest fame to his or her name." Anyone can inspire a child to achieve their potential in life.

A role model is a person whose behavior, example, or success is or can be emulated by others, especially by younger people. The term role model is credited to sociologist Robert K. Merton, who coined the phrase during his career. Merton hypothesized that individuals compare themselves with reference groups of people who occupy the social role to which the individual aspires. An example being the way fans (oftentimes youth) will idolize and imitate professional athletes or entertainment artists. Although the term role model has been criticized.

Conclusion

Good role models are so rare to find these days. Probably as a result of role satisfaction or when good intention turn to bad. Role models should also have a clear set of values and show a commitment to their community. Teens also admired people that showed selflessness and an acceptance of those around them. The final quality looked for in a role model is the ability to overcome obstacles. Role models come into young people's lives in a variety of ways. They are educators, civic leaders, mothers, fathers, clergy, peers, and ordinary people encountered in everyday life. This study showed that being a role model is not constrained to those with fancy titles or personal wealth. In fact, students were

quick to state that “a true role model is not the person with the best job title, the most responsibility, or the greatest fame to his or her name.” Anyone can inspire a child to achieve their potential in life. Children need role models for a lot of reasons. Role models help kids feel more secure in their identities. Young people often compare themselves with others, searching for their own identities and ways of being in the world.

You are all my witness that our gathering here today referrer, pinpoint, gateway, direct, stimulate and cast back our mind to the life, work, and every other activities of a role model who once lived in our mist for forty plus years with every modelling traits that can never be forgotten. Esther **Folorunso Ayantayo**, an outstanding role model. **Thanks for listening.**

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