

## Story #2b

### ***The True Teacher***

*Telling, I became a teacher.  
Listening, I became a student.  
Thanking, I became a friend.*

*And then I woke up to find ...  
I was Truly Teaching!*

*2. Learn something from your student that transforms you,  
then show your gratitude. In other words, truly teach by  
modeling true learning!*  
(The Teacher's Bill of Rights)

If you are *telling* somebody something, you could be teaching. If you are *listening*, you could be a student. If you are *thankng*, you could be a friend. But, if you find yourself, as a teacher, listening to a student so well that they taught you something, and you were being moved at having just learned something new, and then, you thanked them ... then you were being a *true teacher*. You were modeling to them how to learn. You were modeling learning. That is the highest thing for a teacher to do. You want them to thank you, so ... that is what you want to model to your student.

A story. It's back in 2007. I'm in Shanghai International Studies University - SISU, in China. I'm in a position of teaching people who are of all ages. They range from 12 years old to adult. I had students who were doctors, parents, and children. We were going over very simple things having to do with speaking English.

I think it was the first or second day. We split them up into two groups at big round tables and said, "We are going to have a

debate. Oh yeah, we know how to teach debating. In America, we argue a lot. We're really good at it. So, I gave them opposite points of view, and I said, "Work on your point of view and decide how to defend it, because you are going to argue against the other group."

I'm standing in the room watching and every single person sitting at the tables is leaning in. They are listening to each other as if every single person - even the 12-year-olds - are the most important people in the world! And I lose it. I have to go the corner of the room for a minute because I'm crying. It is such a moving experience for me to see this beautiful listening that is going on.

Well, the lesson is a bust. They start debating and they did a terrible job. Every time the other group would say the opposite viewpoint, the arguing group would say, "Well, I could see that. I see that point, too. In fact, I needed that opposite point of view in order to complete my view. In fact, I see a middle way."

So, they did not learn the debating, but they taught me a great lesson. By the end of the day, I ended up telling the students, "You taught me about the middle way all over again. It's not like I had never heard of the middle way. It's not like I don't know of the yin and yang for years, but today, you took me another step forward. You showed me how to actually implement a form of listening for the middle way. I just grew. Thank you very much!"

So, although my lesson was a bust, I found myself thanking them for what they taught me. So in the end, it was a very great success. I was a true teacher that day! And that is what I wish for you - to be the true teacher. That's it for today. I'll see you in one of those tomorrows.

