

Chapter 12

Theme:

Great teachers have an incredible ability to ignore.

Single Best Quote:

Based on Doug Fiore 1999 study:

“One significant variation is that the very best leaders ignore minor errors.”

Points:

1. Great chapter. Realizing and understanding this principle was life changing for me in the classroom, as a spouse and as a father. Whitaker touches on the genius of the great teacher in this chapter.
2. You can look for trouble or you can look away.
3. Great teachers have learned from experience which issues demand immediate attention and which will wait for a more teachable moment
4. I appreciate Whitaker recognizing that, “For the sake of our own self-worth, we tend to stay away from someone who regularly points out our mistakes.” Indicating that although he talks about manipulating and working with difficult people, there is a time to simply stay out of their way. They are not going to change and we do not need that kind of negative, henpecking, one upmanship in our life. Ah, thank you, Whitaker, “Snap back to reality, oh, there goes gravity...”

Self-evaluation and application as a:

- **Shop teacher** – As a shop teacher at times when I determine it is most beneficial I act as if I am unalarmed, unaware or, at least, unshocked by student’s misbehavior or failure in performance. This gives us a twofold advantage:
 - o Concerning both misbehavior and errors of performance: by ignoring the situation I give the student a chance to self-correct which then allows me to the opportunity to avoid a word of criticism/correction into a word of praise/commendation.
 - o Concerning misbehavior: by ignoring the student’s misbehavior the first, or second time, you provide them enough rope to entrap themselves and get clearly entangled because of their own behavior and not because of my pettiness or overzealousness to “get them into trouble.”
- **Bible teacher** – I have learned to ignore people who come to class or church in an attempt to intimidate me when they sit with their arms crossed, constantly shake their heads in disagreement, purposely sit up front but are clearly disengaged with class, ask questions designed to derail instead of for genuine inquiry. I either pretend I do not notice,....or, I call them out publicly, humiliate them, establishing the fact that I’m teaching and they are free to leave and never return.
- **Parent** –
- **Person** –

Questions/Criticisms/Evaluations/Comments of Whitaker’s presentation or perspective:

1. Quote: “Effective teachers model self-control.”
 - a. This “self-control” can be manifest as ignoring the obvious.
 - b. This “self-control” can manifest as an all-out offensive attack with the teacher remaining in complete control.

- c. "Self-control" does not have to be limited to calmness and destined to be void of passion. Was Jesus out of control either time he cleared the temple courts by turning over tables, setting loose the sacrificial animals into stampede mode and verbally attacking the priests, Levites and money changers? No. He was in complete control, but he was not calm, passive nor quite.
2. Whitaker makes interesting comments about high-achievers that I agree with (and, need to remember and embrace). Whitaker points out (without saying exactly this) that one hindrance of a high-achiever is the less than great teacher who seems to be unable to let students/people learn on their own. The high-achiever, like the great teacher, is already self-critical, self-aware and self-reflecting before the mediocre teacher arrives to the scene to use their red pen.