



FEATURED TEACHER AUTHOR

Several years ago, my daughter Giselle and I were rounding the final stretch of road before arriving at our house. As I drove, Giselle, about ten years of age at the time, gazed out at the trees whizzing by. From the corner of my eye I could see her continuously nodding her head in complete agreement with her thoughts. Then she turned to me and said, "You know Dad, I'm really happy to be alive." At that moment, I knew I had done my job as a parent because when one is happy to be alive, you are grateful. And gratefulness leads to making the most of life.

In 2011, Giselle would go on to graduate from Westview High School, the place where I have taught since 1992. She was a varsity cheerleader, NHS member, and graduated in the top 5% of her class. She recently received her Bachelor's Degree from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas and has enrolled in a Master's program at Arizona State University.

Prior to teaching at Westview, I worked as a security guard at Tolleson Union High School, my alma mater. Also being happy to be alive, I made the most of my high school years as a Tolleson Wolverine. I played varsity basketball and baseball, was student body president, homecoming king, and outstanding senior boy. Since those wonder years, Tolleson Union High School District has grown from one high school to five.

During the summer, I had the pleasure of traveling with four of my students to Europe as part of an educational program. We had the privilege of visiting London, Paris, Florence, Assisi, and Rome. My students experienced various cultures and foods, and visited famous landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame Cathedral, and the Vatican in Rome. It was deeply inspiring to see them extremely happy taking in the sites and appreciating all that Europe had to offer. Upon returning to school, they come equipped with a new set of lenses from which to view the world and to impart this newfound perspective with their peers at school. Experiences such as these, whether on a trip or in the classroom, makes being a teacher even more special.

Teaching is a noble profession and Tolleson Union High School District is a noble place to be. Whether you're a Tolleson Wolverine, Westview Knight, La Joya Lobo, Copper Canyon Aztec, or Sierra Linda Bulldog, we're all on the same team.

So as we enter the start of a new school year, let us revel in being happy to be alive – truly alive. This is what I work to instill in my students and what I try to live by. Because this type of awareness is empowering, I leave you with a quote from the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius which illustrates this point. "When you arise in the morning, think of what a precious privilege it is to be alive – to breathe, to think, to enjoy, to love."

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