

Lighting a Spark

The 9th Practice in the Art of Possibility is called “Lighting A Spark” and you will recognise it because in all we do for our students, this is essentially what we want to do. Sure, we want them to pass their exams, and yes, it is nice when your school is recognised for all the systems that are in place, but these are all means to an end, and that end is that lit-up face as your student grasps a concept, captures an idea, revels in the excitement of learning, and all because you and your teachers helped him enrol and own the learning situations he encounters.

“Enrolling is not about forcing, cajoling, tricking, bargaining, pressuring, or guilt-tripping someone into doing something your way. Enrolment is the art and practice of generating a spark of possibility for others to share.

“In the Middle Ages, when lighting a fire from scratch was an arduous process, people often carried about a metal box containing a smouldering cinder, kept alight throughout the day with little bits of kindling. This meant that a man could light a fire with ease wherever he went, because **he always carried the spark.**

“We have at our fingertips, an infinite capacity to light a spark of possibility. Passion, rather than fear, is the igniting force. Abundance, rather than scarcity, is the context.

“So the practice of enrolment is about giving yourself as a possibility to others and being ready, in turn, to catch their spark. Here are some steps :

1. Imagine that people are an invitation for enrolment
2. Stand ready to participate, willing to be moved and inspired
3. Offer that which lights you up
4. Have no doubt that others are eager to catch the spark”

Roz Zander goes on to illustrate with an incident where she needed to pump up her bicycle tyre to get to a Museum only to find that she had only a \$10 note and lacked the two coins to operate the pump. When she asked the petrol attendant if he had change for \$10, he didn't. No one else was around. It seemed like the Museum trip was dead from the ground up. She felt frustrated and helpless until she had a change of perspective. She went back to the pump attendant and asked if he would give her the 2 coins. He said ‘Sure’, and the atmosphere changed from one of transaction to one of beneficence. He was happy to give, she was happy to receive. By inviting him to enrol in her venture to get to the Museum, she had lit a spark.

Ben goes on to tell his story of how he had ‘enrolled’ a big accounting firm into helping, not a successful orchestra, but a failing school enjoy the successful orchestra, and lit sparks every which where. Sorry, this one you have to read yourself (for the several who have bought the book, it is pg 129 – please read it and end with a gulp in your throat). You will also realise when you read it, that this is a picture of a marvellous teacher and we all have the same seed waiting to sprout in us. Here's a snippet.

“I began by having the Philharmonia's cellos play eight bars of a gently undulating accompanying figure. [For music lovers, Zander is referring to Beethoven's Fifth, the slow movement] Turning around to the young people, I asked, ‘How many of you heard the cellos?’ Naturally, everyone raised his hand.” Zander goes on to add next the violas, then a bassoon and a clarinet, and so taught the students how to hear 4 separate voices. He then added the double bass. Now read what happens when the first and second violins come in. “When the second violins entered to play their part, I asked the eager listeners for their remarks. ‘They are too loud,’ shouted back a confident youngster. Members of the Philharmonia smiled at the coaching they were receiving from this ten-

year-old from London's Docklands." Similarly the first violins were too loud and "the youngsters let them know that all was not well." When all seven voices emerged in clear relief against each other, "the silence in that huge warehouse was profound, as each child strained to hear everything Beethoven had to say."

AND this is what we want to achieve with every one of our students that each may be eagerly waiting to hear what they can learn.

So, members of a great fraternity, **LIGHT THE SPARK.**