

# Preface

## *It's a Tough Time to Be a Teacher in America*

**T**eaching has always been a tough task. But in America, it's getting tougher every day. Demands are high, pay is low. Expectations are escalating, while public support is drying up. Even parents are increasingly uninvolved, and litigation is now a common occupational hazard.

Unfortunately, through this stressful period, teachers can't count on anyone to back them up anymore; and their views are frequently ignored by decision makers. At the same time, teachers, at all levels and in all fields (especially special education), feel they are testing more, teaching less, and slowly dying from strangulation by regulation.

What bothers many educators even more is that pupils are increasingly ill mannered, rude, disrespectful, and, sometimes, downright dangerous. (School shootings were never part of the bargain before.)

Worse yet, resources are dwindling, school budgets are shrinking, and teachers everywhere are continuously being asked to do more with less.

To add insult to injury, teacher-bashing has become a national pastime. A growing number of politicians and self-proclaimed reformers have singled out teachers as the "bad guys," responsible for all the real and perceived ills facing public education.

For example, a former U. S. Secretary of Education compared teacher unions to "terrorist" organizations. And popular columnist George Will once described public education as

a “national menace” and as “frightening as any foreign threat.” (Does that sound like any teachers you’ve ever known?)

It’s no wonder that many teachers are being stretched to the limit, some to the point of abandoning their careers. At the same time, few men and minorities are being attracted to the profession. Can a severe teacher shortage be far behind?

Obviously, teachers need many resources during trying times. But what they may need most isn’t always money, materials, facilities, equipment, or supplies. They also need some old-fashioned respect, validation, recognition, inspiration, encouragement, and affirmation. So who is supplying these resources today? Precious few until now!

*Inspirational Quotes, Notes, & Anecdotes That Honor Teachers and Teaching* is a well-deserved tribute to the nation’s most badgered, beleaguered, and belittled professionals. This long-overdue collection provides potentially career-saving homework for the soul of every teacher. It serves both as a wake-up call for teachers to press fiercely forward against odds, and as a voice of conscience for a nation that has too long neglected its most essential industry. Hopefully it can help replenish the nation’s teachers and give them the grit to keep trying.

Easy to read and hard to forget, this little book may well be the quick fix every teacher is looking for to get through the day and to stay the course for an entire career.

Surprisingly, even though America’s teachers are overworked, overwhelmed, underpaid, and unappreciated, many are committed to sticking it out. These professionals aren’t stupid or masochistic, so why do they put up with it?

The good ones are hanging on because in their heart of hearts, they know that theirs is still the most important job they can possibly imagine. Their lives matter and their work counts. Their rewards transcend economics.

What most teachers know—but sometimes forget—is that they are engaged in society’s highest calling. Fortunately, the following pages are full of powerful reminders. Too many

teachers today are frustrated, discouraged, depressed, and disillusioned. They need a boost. That's what this book is for.

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—R. D. R.