

I've been looking back, thinking about how BMS blessed me as a student. Thinking more, I realize that presently, BMS is really blessing my family. It's a great place; my wife loves working here. She has great co-workers and I think everyone who works here feels the same. Then, I look ahead and anticipate how BMS will bless our family as we look forward to sending our kids here in a few years.

What specifically about BMS shaped where I am today, my job, and my interactions with people? Yes, the education was great here. But the best memories I have were always from the simple acts by teachers who taught me valuable lessons through them. At the time, I didn't realize that they were valuable lessons. As an adult now, I realize how good they were.

Starting out in elementary school, when I was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade with Mrs. Glenna Young as our teacher, our class was in the basement down by the art room. We were the only class down there; a rowdy group of kids; there were a lot of boys. One particular year, we had a lot of indoor recess. That didn't go well with the boys in my class. There were a lot of hyperactive kids including myself in that room. We discovered a really fun game to play. We called it floor hockey. We would take the little square erasers, cut them in half, and wrap tape around them so they slid across the floor really well. Then we'd take Mrs. Young's rulers and use them as our hockey sticks. We'd push our desk to the side of the room, check each other into the wall and the desks, and we would break her rulers. She always let us play. She would always tell us not to break her rulers, and inevitably, someone would break a ruler. But she always let us play.

Moving forward to high school, Mr. Herb Zook was our gym teacher. We had a curriculum one year with badminton – kind of an odd sport. For some reason, the guys in my class and I fell in love with it. It was a fun activity for us in gym. Herb recognized that and would pull us out of study halls to “set up the nets” and then we got to spend the rest of our time making sure the equipment was okay!

Additionally in high school, we would try to waste 10-15 minutes of class every morning with Mrs. Ann Quinn. We always thought we were getting one over on her by talking and getting her distracted, only to come to find out that we were talking, and she was listening. We thought we were getting ahead, but she was listening to us. We were being heard and we were building trust in her as a teacher. We would go to her with more than just educational problems and we weren't afraid to ask questions in class.

Lastly, Mr. Bob and one of my favorite memories and it was actually just about 8 months ago that I found out that this is something that Mr. Bob did for us. During half days in high school, some friends and I would go to one friend's house and connect our video game consoles together using an ethernet cord. Four of us would be in one room of the house and the other four would be in another room. We had different TVs so we couldn't cheat on each other by seeing what the others were playing. We had countless hours doing that.

I was reminiscing with one of my friends recently and we still talk about that as a great time. He asked me, “Did you know that Mr. Bob gave us that ethernet cable? I just went to him and asked him if he knew where I could buy a 100 ft. long ethernet cable. Mr. Bob could've just said, ‘Go to Best Buy or find one online.’ But instead, he said, “hold on one second.” A couple minutes later he came back with this ethernet cord.”

So where am I going with all this? These are lessons that I apply to daily life and work.

Back in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Mrs. Young understood our needs. She knew that we were a rowdy bunch of boys who needed to get our energy out somehow. Even though we broke her rulers, we ran into desks, and had erasers flying around the room. I'm sure we drove her nuts with it, but she never showed that and she always let us do it. Why? She understood our needs.

I would imagine it would have been very easy for her to say, "Stop doing that. It's not appropriate. But she understood that we were benefitting from that. In everyday life and work, oftentimes there are things that come up, that frankly may annoy me, but it's always benefitting someone. Just because it's not benefitting me at the time, Glenna showed me how to just sit back, recognize that people have a need, let them do their thing, and they will grow from it.

Moving on to Mr. Zook in gym class: He noticed our enthusiasm and he fostered that. He tried to get us more involved when he saw that we were excited. Thinking about work and with coworkers, I work directly with daycare providers. That's something I try to think about – How can I encourage them? How can I foster their excitement about something? Sometimes there's not a lot of excitement about anything. So what is that badminton in that person's life right now that I can find and throw in there to help build them up?

And Mrs. Quinn: She knew that we needed to talk and vent. She knew that she had a schedule and a class to get to, but she listened to us anyway. She heard us, and she built our trust because of that. Many days I have a tight schedule going from one place to the next and it's something I try to keep in my head. Do I need to listen to someone? Does someone just need to talk? It's okay if I'm 5 or 10 minutes late to my next appointment, because this person needs to talk and I'm there to listen to them.

Lastly, and one of my favorite memories, with Mr. Bob: That simple act of kindness that he probably didn't even think about when he did it - giving that ethernet cord to us made memories that 20 years later we're still talking about as one of our fondest memories from high school. I'm quite certain that it's not within his job description to hand out technology and I hope I don't get you in trouble, Mr. Bob!

He recognized that he could do this simple act of kindness. He made ten high school boys very happy and helped them make memories for a lifetime. I think about that often in my job. What's something small that I can do for someone? Am I going to go above and beyond my job description says? Sometimes a little extra research or giving small assistance; that tiny act, that really doesn't require much from me can make an impact that maybe they'll still remember in 10 or 15 years.

To close, the education is very important in a foundation of school, but the simple acts of the teachers here taught me how to succeed, and how to show God's love both in life and in the workplace. I want to leave you all with a challenge: I challenge you to be mindful of the things that you can do which will have a lasting impact on the people you encounter every day!

-Aaron Spicher, Class of 2008

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