

Henricks, HowardTeaching to Change Lives

4. The Law of the Teacher

Hendricks opens with the first law of teaching: you can only give what you possess, so a teacher must be a lifelong learner. The chapter argues that effective teaching flows from a growing person, and it walks through growing in every dimension of life—intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual.

Key takeaways

- The Law of the Teacher: if you stop growing today, you stop teaching tomorrow. You cannot impart what you do not possess.
- See yourself as a learner first—a student among students—always asking 'How can I improve?'
- Growth is about attitude, not age. Older people can be the most alive learners; young people can be dead in the head.
- Look for teachers who are FAT: Faithful, Available, Teachable. Willingness matters more than head knowledge.
- Spiritual growth is not a separate compartment; it must be integrated with intellectual, physical, social, and emotional growth (the pattern of Jesus in Luke 2:52).

- Grow intellectually by reading and reflecting, taking courses, and above all a personal Bible study program—getting into the Word and letting it get into you.
- Grow physically by bringing money, possessions, time, appetite, rest, and sex under Christ's control—the area Christians most often neglect.
- Grow socially by widening your friendships, including the unsaved and different age groups.
- Evaluate honestly: what to retain, refine, and reject. Experience only helps if it is evaluated experience. The teacher's greatest threat is satisfaction.

Passages worth keeping

“I would rather have my students drink from a running stream than a stagnant pool.”

Captures the whole chapter: teach from a living, growing source, not a stale one.

“The greatest threat to your ministry is your ministry.”

Warns that busyness and success can quietly replace real growth.

How it connects

The chapter's engine is Luke 6:40—students rise to the level of their teacher—so personal growth is not self-improvement but ministry to everyone you teach.

Scripture referenced

- **Luke 6:40** -- Students become like their teacher—so the teacher must be worth becoming.
- **2 Peter 3:18** -- Command to keep growing in grace and knowledge of Christ.
- **Luke 2:52** -- Jesus grew in wisdom, stature, favor with God and men—the model of whole-life growth.
- **Philippians 3:13-14** -- Paul, late in life, still pressing on—rightly related to past, present, future.
- **2 Timothy 2:2** -- Teaching as multiplication: entrust truth to others who will teach others.