

Henricks, HowardTeaching to Change Lives

10. The Law of Readiness

Hendricks argues that teaching works best when both teacher and students come prepared. Most students arrive 'cold,' so the teacher's job is to build momentum before class starts and send learners out motivated to keep studying. The bulk of the chapter is practical: how to use assignments, draw out silent classes, field hard questions, tame dominators, and train note-takers.

Key takeaways

- The Law of Readiness: learning is most effective when both student and teacher are adequately prepared.
- Assignments are the key tool. Good ones precipitate thinking, provide background, and—most importantly—build habits of independent study.
- Good assignments are creative (not busywork), thought-provoking, and doable. If students don't do them, do one in class: pose the question first, then read the passage.
- Your teaching time is a stimulus, not a substitute; the goal is lifelong learners who get into the Word firsthand.
- Predictability lowers impact. Jesus was never predictable, so he was never boring.

- Beat classroom silence with patience and affirmation—celebrate every contribution and make a hero of anyone who speaks.
- Never bluff a hard question. Say 'I don't know, but I'll find out.' Handle threatening questions warmly, not defensively.
- Redirect a dominator: appreciate him privately, enlist his help drawing others in, then call on him.
- Teach people what to look for and they'll find it; train note-taking with outlines that grow gradually less detailed.

Passages worth keeping

“Your teaching time is to be a stimulus, not a substitute.”

Sums up the chapter's aim—move students from being under the Word to being in it themselves.

“The only foolish question in this class is the unasked question. Because it's like an unremoved splinter: It will fester.”

The atmosphere that frees people to participate.

How it connects

The chapter models its own point from Jesus: unpredictable questions and a safe, affirming manner win people before answers ever do.

Scripture referenced

- **Isaiah 27-28** -- Running example of students arriving 'cold' to a passage.
- **Mark 12:13-17** -- Jesus and the tax question—unpredictability that silenced critics.