Off to see the Wizard...

I hope you all remember one of the most classic of American movies, “The Wizard of Oz”. Young Dorothy of Kansas, played by Judy Garland, wanted to go “Over the Rainbow” to escape the dull and strict life of her farm home. Having been caught in a tornado, she is knocked unconscious and dreams that her house is swept up and away to a much different land whereupon she states to her dog, “I don’t believe we’re in Kansas anymore, Toto”. There are so many memorable scenes and characters and bits of dialogue that we carry with us still and that many of use on different occasions to describe the situation at hand.

From “if I only had a brain...the heart...the nerve” to “I’ll get you my pretty, and your little dog too”...we all have special memories and impressions of this movie that has become ingrained in our culture.

I think this can serve as a metaphor for us in a couple of ways. First, our students... They are on their journey too. For some, merely enrolling in college is an act in courage. They are timid and uncertain and fearful. Many want knowledge, but it is a “just the facts, please,” approach...and for some their hearts remain captured by their small circle of family and friends. They are like Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Lion who wanted specific things. Their perspectives are limited. In carrying out the Wizard’s demands, they embarked on an adventure they could not have imagined previously. While the Wizard was merely a mortal behind a curtain, he nevertheless challenged them to become what they were not. In reality he could not give them what they wanted, they had to do it themselves. Even though he concluded, “I am not a bad man, just a bad wizard”, I would beg to differ. The Wizard became a catalyst for change. Because of his demands, Scarecrow used his wits to scheme and plan and get them into the castle of the Wicked Witch; Tin Man loved Dorothy and worried about her and wept to see her leave; Lion became ultimately strong and steadfast in defense of Dorothy ...and Dorothy learned that she was capable of achieving what no one else could...whether by accident or not, she succeeded.

So, too, should we desire to be a catalyst for change in the lives of our students! We want them to leave more—see a bigger picture, use their reasoning and wits and heart and gumption to achieve... We must encourage them to step out and be brave and searching and smart. We want them to see a world of different cultures, grand opportunities for growth and service. And while there is indeed “no place like home”, there is still a world out there that needs to be dealt with.

We try to develop our students in ways they don’t expect. I can think of no greater compliment than for a student to say, “that teacher made me think and feel and grow.” For many, sadly, this does not happen, but for those who do, it is our one brief shining moment as teachers.

As we begin the semester, think what we can do (or not do) to challenge and inspire our students to get their “brain” and “heart” and “courage” as we engage in this intricate and often inexplicable thing we call “teaching”.

I thank you for all that you do to engage our MCC Family of Students! Remember, I am a phone call away to share your challenges, successes, and questions! Namaste’, Rosie ☺
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