



Gary Toward and Chris Henley

# Celebrating Teachers

## Making a Difference

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# Foreword by Ben Bailey Smith



God, I must have been a real pain in the backside at school.

At 14, I knew I was smart, but I was way more comfortable procrastinating or mickey-taking. I was a one-trick pony – if it wasn’t English or drama, the best a teacher could hope for from me was hour-long day-dreams, silently staring out of windows thinking of girls and poetry, or poetry I could write to impress girls. At worst they would get pure old-fashioned disruption. I wasn’t a bad kid by any means, but *boy* was I annoying.

Having gone on, as a young adult, to spend a decade as a youth worker, I quickly saw how smart kids could be a problem if they weren’t *engaged*: emotionally and intellectually invested in the subjects they studied. I loved youth work – and still respect and support it from afar – but I knew it wasn’t my calling. When I left the profession aged 29 and stepped onto a stage to tell stories to strangers in the hope that they’d laugh, there were no coincidences in play. You could trace that bold decision back to a handful of individuals whose words and actions left indelible prints on my imagination, knowledge, self-esteem and self-belief.

The first were a winning couple – two history teachers, both black – a man named Mr Lyle and a woman named Ms Dauphin. They both had a remarkable way of pulling my head out of the clouds and into the importance of appreciating where you are as a direct or indirect result

of what had come before: the Second World War, in which my own father crawled into an infamous 77-day battle via the beaches of Normandy; the Windrush that brought my mother's family to the UK; the impersonal politics that created the hostile environment of the early 1980s into which I was born.

It all felt thrilling and relevant and suddenly I was looking forward to a Year 9 class that *wasn't* English. Looking back, the poignancy of the subjects they covered was really only half the reason. It was their passion, their belief and their energy, their thinly veiled firmness on us black boys who, statistically, struggled in inner-city areas, that made me sit up and take notice. I'm pretty sure that's why historical documentaries are my favourite kind of programme to this day.

I wish I could say it improved my grades as well, but that's another story that we don't need to disappoint my mum with again right now.

What it did immediately inject in me was the importance of focusing on the things that thrill you. I went into my English and theatre A levels with renewed vigour and determination. In English in particular, my teachers Mrs Barton and Miss Jonas knew that I wanted to do well and so would never let me slack; they were on me like a rash and the approach was super effective. I found myself wanting to impress them, wanting to make them happy, wanting to be praised.

Friendly pressure is good for me – I procrastinate without it. No one has forced me to write this foreword, which means you're kind of lucky to be reading it – I was *this* close to making a sandwich and rewatching the whole of *The Sopranos* instead.

The motivational ability of Gary Lyle, Helen Dauphin, Mich Jonas and Anne Barton mirrored the attention of other strong adults in my life – people I didn't want to disappoint. I try to be the same with my teenaged daughters when it comes to maintaining their focus, although I will quickly lose all parental intensity if they suggest alternatives to work such as s'mores and Marvel movies.

It's strange how transferable knowledge and skills can creep into your brain without you noticing it. It's like beautifully tailored inception – you just can't see the seams. I simply thought I was 'blessed', 'lucky' or 'talented' when I moved from stand-up to acting, to screenwriting, to children's novels ... But if I dig a little deeper, it's easy to see the link: where I inherited the confidence to express myself and my stories through writing or performing.

It's no surprise to me that my wife is a teacher. The good ones still inspire me; they invoke a romance and a nostalgia that has crept into my subconscious with so much verve that I went and married one. I come home every day from my various silly showbiz jobs and there she is at 8, 9 or even 10 pm, still grafting, preparing or debriefing, unable to go to bed until she's unlocked the puzzle of a difficult kid in her class, or created a foolproof lesson plan for the morning. I've seen her take time out of her own private life to visit vulnerable kids at home. I've seen her risk her own health during a global pandemic, all just to give these kids the invaluable gift of consistency. She will not rest until every one of her 30 pupils are up, on their feet, learning, contributing and smiling. It's unreal to watch from my cushy position of chauffeured cars and fresh fruit plates by the illuminated mirrors.

There's still a myth floating around that teachers knock off an hour and a half earlier than the rest of us, swan about during their numerous holidays, pocketing cash until the next 30 whoevers come through the gates in September. I'll be honest – I *wish* that were true. If it were, my wife and I would have real leisure time in-between my gigs to watch movies and drink cocktails, shoot the breeze ... But, like the vast majority of her peers, she's fully *invested*, 24/7, and not appropriately remunerated for it in my opinion, but that's a different point.

This point here is about that *investment*. The returns on it are profound – it cannot be measured in quality or quantity. It's deeper than that. Positive engagement of our young people should be the number one focus of any nation. I mean, let's be real – it's not me and you and all these other old farts inheriting this world, is it? So, yes, why not? Let's celebrate the people who continue to have a small but significant hand in creating more good guys from the ground up, because I'm telling you – only the good guys can save us.

Thank you and God bless you all.

And sorry for that D, Mr Lyle.

It's technically still a pass, though.

Ben Bailey Smith  
Screenwriter, actor, comedian, author and rapper<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Familiar to many as Doc Brown, his stand-up comedy stage name.

# Foreword by Sir Anthony Seldon



In my years as a head and vice chancellor, I met a few teachers who thought they were ‘inspiring’. But I met many more who did not think that they were inspiring, or sufficiently inspiring, and wanted to do something about it. That’s why they were great teachers, and that’s why teaching is a great, if not the best, profession.

This is evident throughout this important and timely book. The best teachers, and you will read about them here, are constantly challenging themselves to be better. They will be as eager to learn on their last day in school as they were on their first. The self-satisfied teachers, as is true of the self-satisfied everywhere, do not think that they have anything to learn.

There is indeed no better profession than teaching. I had a privileged education at an elite boarding school and an elite university. Barely any of my friends and associates would have considered a career in teaching, and although they never told me to my face, they rather looked down on me for doing so. The old jibe ‘those who can’t do, teach; those who can’t teach, teach history’ was never far from their minds (I taught history).

Looking at them now, as many of my contemporaries from school and university are beginning to retire, I sense a common factor: a certain emptiness in their lives. Their occupations – as lawyers, accountants, bankers and businesspeople, or in roles across the media and

advertising – might have been financially rewarding, but were also often devoid of deep meaning and significance. They are unable to say, as we who have taught can say, that they changed the lives of thousands of young people for the better.

In almost no other profession do people willingly work long hours without demanding extra pay. The pages that follow are full of examples of the difference that teachers make, partly because the young people know that they care about them. Teachers stay on after school, they arrive early, they work long into the evening, they work at weekends and during the so-called ‘holidays’. Why? Because they’re inspired to do good and because they care. A professional lifetime of doing good and caring helps make them into the people they are. Those in other professions will rarely do anything extra without charging for it. Teachers have their reward – and money-watchers, equally, have their own reward.

Society still does not properly recognise teachers, in status, respect or material recompense. In terms of pay, it will never reward them as fully as they deserve. It does reward surgeons and other medical specialists. Surgeons open up bodies and save lives. Teachers open up minds and inspire better lives. Books like this will help to make teachers feel that their lives matter. In my experience, because teaching can be hard, lonely and tiring, we need to be constantly reminded how much we matter.

I would defy any teacher, would-be teacher or anyone who has opted for another job but who is thinking about teaching, even if only as a remote possibility, not to be uplifted by this important book.

*Sir Anthony Seldon*

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# Introduction

*If you have to put someone on a pedestal, put teachers. They are society's heroes.*

Guy Kawasaki<sup>1</sup>

Chris started teaching in 1979 and Gary in 1982. Between us we've been around the block. Ten schools, three headships, two deputy headships, 70 years of teaching and leading in schools across England. It has been a rollercoaster, but mostly one with incredibly satisfying bends, bumps and climbs, and only the odd cavernous drop. We have loved teaching. It has been our passion and will forever be so. For us there is nothing better than when you walk into a classroom or assembly hall to be greeted by a sea of faces which awaits your input. To have the platform to inspire, or to share your enthusiasm for your subject, is a huge honour. Not every pupil,<sup>2</sup> of course, buys in straight away, but that's part of the deal. The challenge, the reason for being there, is to take each and every one of your pupils on a journey to new places and new opportunities. To ride the sunny uplands of the mind, help pupils to wonder and instil them with awe. To furnish them with knowledge and skills that will help them achieve some, if not all, of their dreams. The fact that some of our former pupils have been kind enough to say that we managed that for them has been a wonderful reward over the years. You don't become a teacher to get rich. It's not the sort of job you do because you know that you'll very soon be able to buy a mansion or a flash car. You do it because of something that's more important than money: a desire to create change, to make a difference.

Since we hung up our chalk, whiteboard markers and electronic pens, it has been our privilege and joy to pass on our experience to the next generation of teachers. Our business, Decisive Element, has taken us all around the UK and into Europe, and our award-winning and bestselling books have circumnavigated the globe. In our presentations to trainee and newly qualified teachers (NQTs), we often ask them the question,

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1 Quoted in Jason Fell, Guy Kawasaki: no 'secret sauce' for tech success, *Entrepreneur* (1 June 2012). Available at: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/223691>.

2 Throughout the book we'll use a variety of terms to describe the young people we teach, including 'kids' as it's a common term.

'Why are you getting into this job?' We acknowledge the challenges that they will face. Not every pupil will play nicely and do exactly as you want them to do, not every parent is fulsome in their support, not every newspaper is flushed with praise for the profession, and some of your friends might think you enjoy a 9am to 3pm working day and 13 weeks of holiday a year, which you spend sitting on a beach drinking sangria and soaking up the sun in between dips in a cobalt blue ocean. Oh, and then of course there's the government, the Department for Education (it's had various names over the years), her majesty's inspectorate and whoever is the current secretary of state for education all sticking their oars in. They all have a say in the ever-changing and turbulent world of teaching. But almost without fail, our fledgling teachers always come back to us with answers that make us instantly proud of them. They tell us how they want to make a difference, to share their passion for their subject, to help young people, to pay back the support they had. None tell us that it is for money; it is nearly always a moral or ethical reason that led them into the profession.

We believe there are many people who go above and beyond the call of duty in their chosen field, but there are not many professions in which people work extra hours for free. We cannot imagine many folk saying, 'I'll nip in on Saturday morning to help out,' knowing there would be no monetary benefit. We are being a bit tongue-in-cheek here, but we do believe that there are not many other professions in which the highly trained professional will turn up on a wet Sunday to help run the school Christmas Fair, or spend a week away from their loved ones leading 50 teenagers on an educational visit. Every teacher that goes into the profession knows that this is part of the deal and that they will not be paid for doing those things when they occur out of normal school hours. We have been in awe of our colleagues over the years. At one point, when we taught in the same school, we could count over 100 clubs and activities that went on each week during breaks, lunchtimes, and before and after school – all run by teachers and support staff for free.

And there's another thing. We're using the term 'teachers' but we're also talking about teaching assistants, lecturers, learning support assistants, librarians, and so on – they all teach. They all make a difference and share that common *raison d'être* of changing their pupils' lives for the better. They, in the words of Guy Kawasaki, are 'society's heroes', far too often unsung and – like our medical colleagues – far too often

criticised, when, in fact, they are busily going about their daily role, making differences that will have long-term and often life-changing effects.

This book tells the story of those heroes by looking at a snapshot of what goes on across the UK – across the world, in fact – in our wonderful profession. It has often been said that medics save lives, that they heal people, and we agree. What a wonderful thing. It must be amazing to be able to do that. Teachers have a similarly important role; they make people. During the school years, up to the age of 16, we estimate that a full-time school pupil will spend around 16,000 hours in the company of teachers, which is almost identical to our estimation of time spent ‘at home’. However, there’s a difference. Time ‘at home’ typically isn’t spent in the proximity of parents or carers; kids play with friends, go to clubs and do things away from their families. But at school they are constantly under the gaze of teachers. It’s a huge responsibility, as parents are putting their trust in teachers to help build their kids.

If you have ever seen us present, you will know that we are a great fan of the story that retired professional footballer Ian Wright tells about his primary school teacher, Mr Pigden. In fact, the power of the impact made by his teacher is instantly demonstrated in Ian’s autobiography, *A Life in Football*. The dedication reads: ‘For my teacher, Mr Sydney Pigden’. Wright goes on to explain that he was ‘the first positive male figure I had in my life.’<sup>3</sup>

Ian Wright tells us he had a chaotic childhood, that he’d do anything not to have to go home. Finding that positive male role model was the catalyst to his future success: if Mr Pigden ‘hadn’t worked to put me on the straight and narrow, I wouldn’t be the person I turned out to be.’<sup>4</sup> When someone saw Ian Wright the child, instead of the challenging behaviour that he sometimes displayed, his future life would be transformed. Ian explains how one of the simplest interventions made such a difference to him. Mr Pigden simply took the time to sit down and talk with him. If Chris and I had a pound for every angry pupil who we’d scooped up from a classroom over the years, who said to us of their teacher, ‘They just don’t listen!’, we’d be very rich. Mr Pigden defused that issue with Ian, who freely admits that he was an angry

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3 Ian Wright, *A Life in Football: My Autobiography* (London: Constable, 2016), p. 82.

4 Wright, *A Life in Football*, pp. 164–165.

young person with ‘full on rage’.<sup>5</sup> Yet Mr Pigden cut through that and formed a positive relationship with the young Ian, using what his pupil was good at – football – as a foundation. As Ian says:

*He did so much for me as a footballer, which helped me elsewhere in life – he taught me about playing for the team, how I needed to pass the ball to other people. That was all part of him showing me how to communicate properly.<sup>6</sup>*

Mr Pigden may well have only been Ian’s teacher for a relatively short time at primary school but his impact has been profound and long lasting. Surely there can be no better legacy than when you have used your skills to create positive change that transcends your own lifetime and has a knock-on effect on others.

That situation is no better summed up than by an anonymous letter to *The Guardian*.<sup>7</sup> Very sadly, a parent writes to say thank you to a teacher who has recently died, leaving a legacy of overwhelming positivity. The writer thanks the teacher for not only being inspirational for her child but also for the wider ranging benefits that came from the relationship – something that every anxious parent would want.

*You made parents feel as cared for as our children.*

It’s an emotional read, not just because it’s evident that there was great sadness at the passing of this wonderful teacher and that it was incredibly hard for the parent to tell her child that his teacher had died, but because you gradually realise that because of this one teacher, many other children will benefit. The author of the letter, you learn, is also a teacher and was inspired professionally by her child’s teacher, adopting techniques she saw having an impact on her child and their peers. They communicated something even more powerful than that: a vision.

*In the short time I knew you, you taught me about the type of teacher I aspire to be.*

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5 Wright, *A Life in Football*, p. 82.

6 Wright, *A Life in Football*, p. 83.

7 Anonymous, A letter to ... the teacher who inspired my young son, *The Guardian* (11 April 2020). Available at: [https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/apr/11/a-letter-to-the-teacher-who-inspired-my-young-son?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/apr/11/a-letter-to-the-teacher-who-inspired-my-young-son?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other).

On BBC One's *The One Show*, the actor Sir David Jason explained that Jason is not his real surname.<sup>8</sup> It is a stage name he chose when he came to register with the actors' union, Equity, as he discovered that there was already an actor called David White – his real name. It was then he remembered his English teacher, who had enthralled him with many a book, in particular one containing the story of Jason and the Argonauts, and so the surname Jason was chosen.

The teachers that we are looking at in this book are mere humans, but in all cases they seem to have superhuman abilities. Like sporting greats such as Muhammad Ali, Jesse Owens, Billie Jean King and Tanni Grey-Thompson, who transcend their sports for a variety of reasons, teachers can do the same and affect lives beyond the classroom and well into the future. There is no clearer way to see that than when a teacher inspires one of their pupils to follow in their footsteps.

The reason why both of us became teachers is because of teachers. We had totally different upbringings yet were each inspired to teach by a teacher. There is no history of teaching in either of our families. Chris comes from a long line of naval officers; Gary from a long line of coal miners. Chris was expected to join the navy to carry on the family tradition and Gary saw teachers as being on a social and intellectual pedestal so high that he never even thought he could join them. For both of us, to take a step to the side and develop a passion for education took quite a spark. And for each of us the fire was lit differently.

## Gary's story

In July 1972 Gary ran out of the back door of his junior school, darted across the playground and leapt over the stone wall into the adjacent field. There he sat, back against the wall, sobbing. It was the last day of the summer term and he was leaving to go to grammar school, having passed the eleven-plus. His years of junior school hadn't been all plain sailing, but he'd loved it like a second home. He'd had some lovely teachers who made the sun shine in their lessons, and one who seemed to take joy in hitting her pupils with a ruler and pulling their hair. Years later, Gary bumped into another ex-pupil of this teacher, who said, 'I went to her funeral. Just to check if she was dead!' Sad

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8 BBC, *The One Show*. Broadcast 26 October 2020.

but true, and it illustrates our earlier point about how, when teachers make a difference, they never un-make that difference. This is why it's so important that the difference is a positive one.

Fast-forward past the sunny summer holidays (Gary only remembers having great summer weather as a child) and the newly uniformed Gary, complete with a woollen blazer and all manner of new pens and pencils, became a secondary school pupil. It was a grammar school, so supposedly a cut above, but it was an unbelievably violent place with bullying at every turn. Gary was shocked on the first day to see pupils with full hippy beards. As a small 11-year-old, the gulf between him and those in the upper sixth was huge. Very little inspirational happened in the way of teaching to light Gary's fire throughout the first four and a half years. In fact, the opposite was true. Gary went from loving junior school to disliking secondary school. School became just a step he had to take before he got to the world of work, and he did just enough to get by.

It still puzzles him today that the education system at the time (and, indeed, we still do this in some parts of the UK) tested kids at the age of 10 or 11 and separated them on the basis of that test into different schools. Many of Gary's friends went to a secondary modern school, having not reached the standard required for grammar school; Gary hardly saw them again. The illusion that the grammar school was better is also still puzzling, because other than a few teachers who did the odd thing differently, this was a school that seemingly had little ambition to get the best out of every pupil. Looking back, Gary feels that middle-class kids with well-educated parents were at a huge advantage at that school, as they had a history of educational success at home and if the teachers were not that inspirational, at least they had something to compensate. Gary had loving, intelligent parents, but both had to leave school aged 14 to earn a wage to help their families. They wanted the best for him, but did not understand how that worked educationally. Thankfully, today, both Chris and Gary feel that our teachers are light years ahead and more and more working-class pupils are inspired to raise their aspirations. Having said that, there's still a lot of work to be done in levelling things out.

Outside of school Gary played many sports and had a range of interests. One of these was being a member of the Air Training Corps (ATC), which saw him go gliding and flying. Having been born only 15 years after the end of the Second World War, he had always been fascinated by war stories and, in particular, the Battle of Britain. So, the

combination of the thrills of being in the ATC and his vivid imagination led him to the conclusion that he should join the RAF and become a pilot. This meant working harder and stepping up. This he was prepared to do to achieve his dream. Halfway through his fifth year came a definitive moment: his interview with the RAF. Gary now looks back with amazement to think that he simply took the day off school to attend it. There was no link between school and the RAF recruiting office and no letter from his parents. He simply hopped on a bus to Newcastle. Safeguarding was a distant shore!

Excitedly, Gary stepped into the RAF office. This was to be the beginning of his journey to the skies. Twenty minutes later he left, his eyes blurred by the tears he was desperately trying to hold back. He'd failed. The first test was eyesight and whilst he had perfect vision, he did not appear to see in colour very well. He'd failed the colour blindness test and his dream was instantly shattered. You cannot be a pilot without good colour vision.

Back at school there were no careers pep talks. There was no support system. There was no plan B. However, sitting in a chemistry lesson – a subject he really liked, not just because it had practical elements to it but because his teacher was engaging, told stories, made the class laugh and seemed a bit different to the rest of the old-school tweed-jacketed and tartan-skirted teachers he had for other lessons<sup>9</sup> – he clearly looked a bit glum. Mr de Middelaer, with his sharp Mancunian accent (Gary remembers another pupil asking him if he was from Liverpool, which not go down well at all), obviously noticed this and asked where he'd been when he missed the last lesson. Gary told him what had happened, explaining that he had just had his dream whipped out from under him because he was colour-blind.

What happened next changed Gary's life as his teacher stepped back and said, 'Right, that explains why you keep messing up the titration test. You need a different indicator. I will sort it so you can use bromophenol blue.' O level chemistry, as it was then, had a practical test. One thing you had to do was balance an acid and an alkali to have a neutral pH. The indicator generally used was methyl orange. However, Gary, who was acing every other aspect of his practicals, could not get the titration test right. Mr de Middelaer has spotted the issue. Gary could not see the colour change, but with a different indicator he could

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9 Other types of clothing were no doubt worn, but memories work in strange ways!

succeed. The effect was miraculous for Gary. Suddenly he was nailing every titration test and could go into his chemistry exam with confidence.

This moment – this one act of a teacher noticing something, asking a question, then finding a solution (literally) – changed Gary's life. In Gary's head, a message from a Disney song was becoming an embryonic idea: '*I wan'na be like you*'.

This one act, a spark in the dark, of a single teacher seeing a problem and creating a way forward changed Gary's life: the future teacher was born. Thank you, Mr de Middelaer.

## Chris's story

Chris's story is different. His father was a naval officer, and the expectation was that sons of naval officers would be sent away to boarding school at the age of eight. There was no discussion about it, that was the way it was. Chris's home was in Tunbridge Wells in Kent and the school chosen for him was in Winchester, nearly 100 miles away. Chris has no certain recollection of ever having been to Winchester before that time. He had certainly never been to the school; he didn't know a single other boy or a single adult.

Chris's father had a distinguished career in the navy, and Chris was hugely respectful of him, but empathy was not his strongest card. Chris – as a little boy of eight – was absolutely dreading the day when he was to be sent away, away from his home, his teddy bears, his guinea pigs and everything he had ever known. His father came upstairs to say goodnight the night before, and said to him, 'I expect you are so excited. You'll probably find it hard to get to sleep.' Chris did sleep; he cried himself to sleep.

The next day Chris and his mother went up to London on the train and were treated to lunch in his father's club: uniformed stewards, oak-panelled rooms, crusty colonels in wing-backed chairs. Best behaviour was expected, even from a little boy who just wanted to cry. After the lunch, Chris was taken in a taxi (the one glimmer of something positive for the day, as they went over Westminster Bridge and Chris had never seen the Houses of Parliament before) and they arrived at Waterloo Station to join the school train. They were greeted by a very

severe but quite kindly lady with a clipboard. She wore a long trench coat and stout brown shoes. Chris thinks she had a moustache, but that may be a figment of his imagination which has grown over the years.

Chris's parents had lost interest in him at this point as they bumped into old friends from navy days and Chris was left standing on the platform next to the rather fierce-looking clipboard lady. Then came the fateful moment when the train was due to depart. All aboard! You are probably imagining that Chris got a hug and a goodbye from his parents at this point. No. It didn't happen. He was manoeuvred into a seat next to the window, clutching his teddy bear and crying. The train pulled out from the station in clouds of steam – yes, it was that long ago. He spent the next hour and a half staring out of the window at the steam billowing out over the hedgerows, crying. Half an hour to Woking, half an hour to Basingstoke, half an hour to Winchester.

On arrival at Winchester the new boys were met by a tall man with wild, eccentric, white hair and they were shepherded into his car – a very dilapidated Morris Oxford estate. From certain memory, there were about six boys crammed into the car. Health and safety? Probably not! After a short journey of perhaps ten minutes they arrived in front of a cathedral of a building. It had been built, so Chris learned later, in the Victorian age as either a hospital or an asylum. Chris was taken in through the grand entrance and glimpsed the longest corridor he had ever seen. It stretched to eternity. He knew no one, he had no idea what would happen next, he didn't even know if there would be food, not that he was hungry anyway.

That first night he curled up in his bed, crying, and whispered in his teddy bear's ear, 'Looks like it's just me and you, Ted!' He cried for a week. Years later, Chris came across a letter from the headmaster's wife to his mother, written about a week after his arrival, reassuring her that little Chris had shown no signs of homesickness. The anger that this letter provokes in Chris even to this day is almost unfathomable. Chris was a broken, traumatised little boy.

Into this world stepped a young history teacher called Mr Maxse. Chris remembers vividly the first time he saw him. Masters were required to each sit at one of the tables in the dining room and supervise breakfast. As Mr Maxse approached the table, it was obvious that he was not a morning person. From the moment he sat down at the table, it was clear that he and Chris were going to get along. He was cool, he was

funny, he was sporty and they shared a love of cricket. He had a Sunbeam Rapier, convertible, with red leather seats and square wing mirrors. Now that was cool. He also taught lessons to die for. Chris remembers doing the Second World War with him, and he would do the Winston Churchill voice for all those great speeches. Awesome. Chris was mesmerised.

The biggest thing, however, was on another level altogether. To use today's parlance, he 'got' Chris. He knew exactly where this little boy was at with his emotions. He gave Chris the only reason he had for staying in that barracks of a school. Chris's every inclination was to run away, except for the fact there was an enormously high fence all around the grounds and he wouldn't have known where to go anyway.

Mr Maxse changed Chris's life. He was his inspiration, his role model, his saviour and, as Gary said, the Disney song 'I wan'na be like you' resonated in his head. He wanted to be a teacher, just like Mr Maxse. Time and again, through Chris's long career, when confronted with a particular issue or problem, Chris would think, 'How would Mr Maxse have dealt with that? What words would he have used? What would his facial expression have been? What about his body language?' Mr Maxse had clearly discovered that age-old secret of getting people to want to do what he wanted them to do. That's really what behaviour for learning is about.

Chris has kept in touch with Mr Maxse throughout life. Indeed, Mr Maxse came to stay with Chris and his wife only last year. There have been many times when Chris has tried to thank him for what he did, but somehow he has never found the right words.

This book is for you, Mr Maxse and Mr de Middelaer. It is for all teachers who have had a profound impact on young people's lives. This book is an ode to teachers, a tribute to those amazing teachers who have transformed lives and who continue to do so on a daily basis. We salute you and we thank you.

# This book celebrates the superhero of the classroom: the teacher

Gary Toward and Chris Henley believe that teaching is the best and most important profession. Now, you might argue that it would be medicine that should take that accolade – as medics save lives and mend people. But teachers create lives and ‘make’ people. They, in fact, create medics!

Teachers make a difference, and often that difference is life-changing. In this book, Gary and Chris look at some of the many cases where such a difference has been made and examine exactly what it was about the teacher that made such an impact on the life of the young person – and they also highlight the key approaches that teachers might want to try out in their own classroom, with their own pupils.

The authors link the real-life case study stories to what educational research and cognitive science tell us, and point the way for all teachers to adopt, adapt and develop these effective strategies and approaches in their own practice.

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Shines a light on real teachers, their tireless and motivational work, and how they make a difference every day to so many.

Tim Sutcliffe, Chief Executive Officer, Symphony Learning Trust

**Gary Toward** and **Chris Henley** have over 70 years' collective experience in leading and teaching in schools, and have been colleagues for over 30 years. In the last five years, through their business Decisive Element, they have delighted audiences with their presentations based on the six successful books they have co-authored.

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