Have you ever been confronted by an angry parent? An angry teacher? An angry student? It’s so tempting to be the people represented in the poem. Our survival instinct makes us want to engage and fuel each other’s rage. For professionals, however, engaging is not an option. But haven’t some of your teachers missed that memo? Acting calm in the face of an upheaval requires skill, and possessing this skill is a must for anyone who dares to call herself a teacher. Mastering this skill, however, requires lots of patience and lots of practice. What better time than now to teach your teachers how to master the art of remaining in control, regardless of how out of control someone else becomes.

Remember that most, if not all, of your teachers are doing the best they can with the skills they currently possess. They’d handle conflict much differently and more effectively if they only knew how. It is very likely that some of your teachers have never been taught how to handle conflict calmly, professionally, and effectively. Today you’ll show them how.

INSERVICE

Begin by asking your teachers to consider the following points. You may want to have these points posted for everyone to see.

**Points to Ponder**

- If a flame is not fueled, it will soon burn out.
- When a person loses his cool, losing your cool in return will fuel his flame.
- When a person loses his cool, not losing your cool will cause his flame to eventually burn out.
- It is human nature to want to scream back at someone who is screaming at you.
- While on the job, it is unprofessional to scream at someone who is screaming at you.
- Two screaming people never solve any problems.
- As educators, you are sometimes confronted by parents or students who have lost their composure. When this happens, they are often looking to you to fuel their flame.
- It is never productive or appropriate for you, a professional, to lose control, no matter how out of control a parent or student becomes.
- If you’re going to deal with an out-of-control person effectively, you have to defuse her anger before you can effectively address the cause of that anger.