

## No Limits

by Dennis Granzen

*"Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great."*

*- Mark Twain*

Talented and dedicated educators are precious gifts to their students. They instill a love of learning, find ways to transmit complicated facts and concepts to young minds, and often act as mentors to those in their charge.

However, just as important - sometimes even more so - are a student's peers. Who you learn with is as crucial as who you learn from. The culture of learning in an educational setting, its atmosphere, can either enhance and encourage or detract from and discourage a particular student's achievement. And the culture and atmosphere are determined to a large degree by the students.

When choosing a college or university, students and their families should keep an eye on the student body as well as the faculty. One reason the "elite" colleges are elite is that the students are diverse and motivated. While not everyone will be admitted to the elite schools, whatever school you might attend is going to have within it groups of students more interested in learning than others. Attach yourself to those groups; find a way to contribute to them, and you'll be in good shape. And never forget that students with disabilities, whatever their particular labels or challenges, can contribute to the culture of learning.

The same principle holds for elementary, middle and high school. We need to find that group of students with whom to attach. That's one reason why so many of us feel inclusion is so important. Learning together, in an atmosphere of mutual curiosity and encouragement, with students who are both like you and different from you, makes everyone achieve more. It also brings out the best in teachers.

W.B. Yeats once wrote, "Education is not filling a bucket, but lighting a fire." That fire, lit by teachers and parents, is best stoked by fellow students.

Family Footnotes  
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